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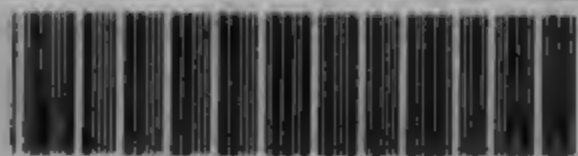
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F E S T U S

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# FESTUS

A POEM

BY

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

*TENTH EDITION*



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1877

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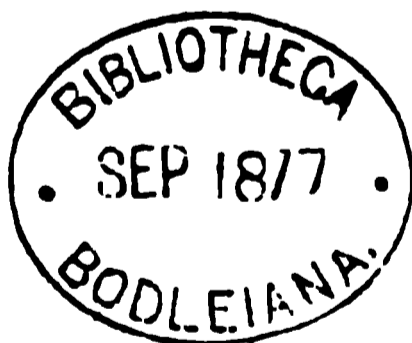
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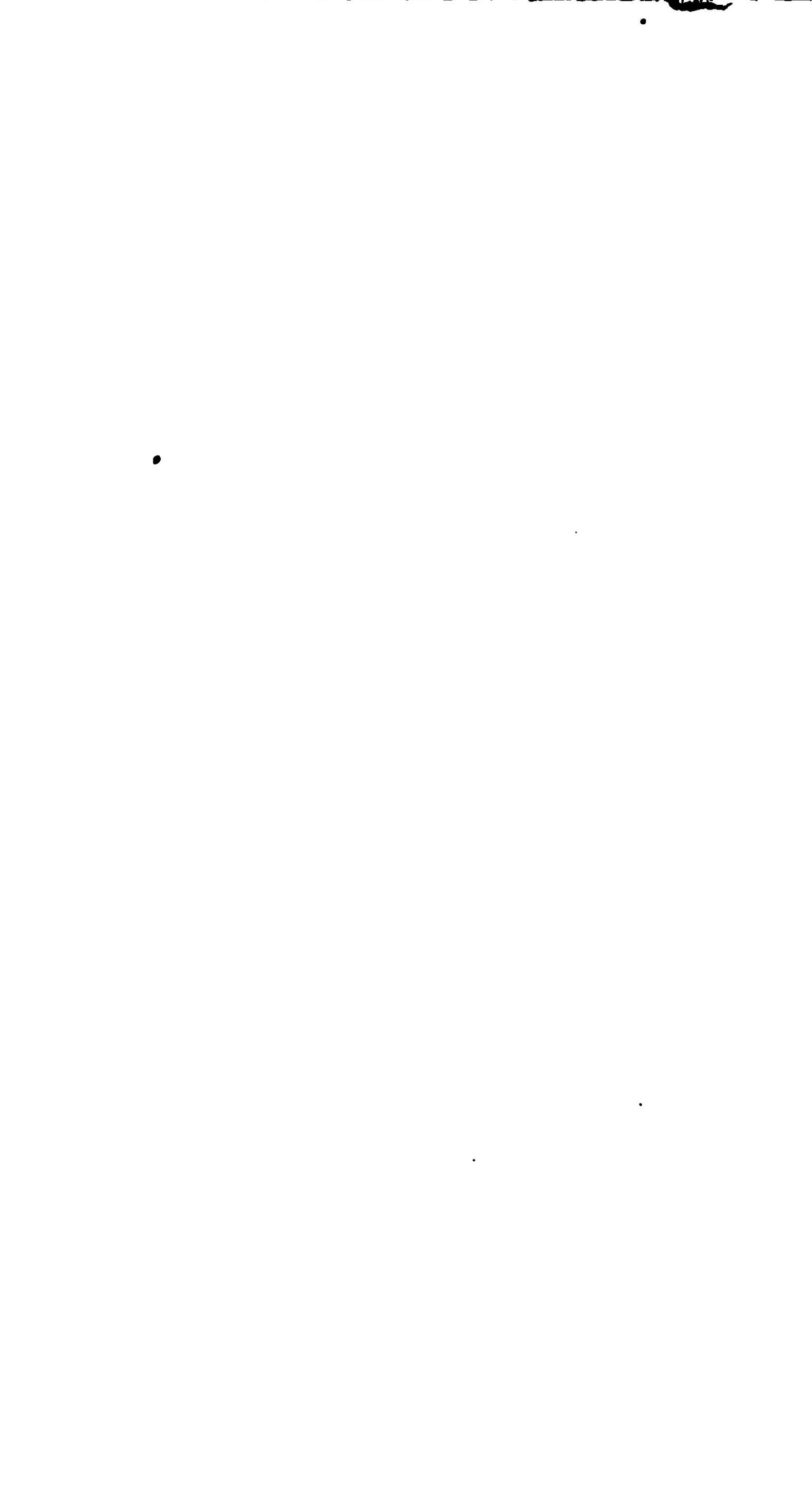
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## *DEDICATION.*

MY FATHER ! unto thee to whom I owe  
All that I am, all that I have and can ;

Who madest me in thyself the sum of man  
In all its generous aims and powers to know,  
These first-fruits bring I ; nor do thou forego  
Marking when I the feat thus closed, began,

Which numbers now near three years from its plan,  
Not twenty summers had embrowned my brow.

Life is at blood-heat every page doth prove.  
Bear with it. Nature means Necessity.

If here be aught which thou canst love, it springs  
Out of the hope that I may earn that love,  
More unto me than immortality ;  
Or to have strung my harp with golden strings.



### *L'ENVOI.*

READ this, world ! He who writes is dead to thee,  
But still lives in these leaves. He spake inspired :  
Night and day, thought came unhelped, undesired,  
Like blood to his heart. The course of study he  
Went through was of the soul-rack. The degree  
He took was high : it was wise wretchedness.  
He suffered perfectly, and gained no less  
A prize than, in his own torn heart, to see  
A few bright seeds : he sowed them—hoped them truth.  
The autumn of that seed is in these pages.  
God was with him ; and bade old Time, to the youth,  
Unclench his heart, and teach the book of ages.  
Peace to thee, world !—farewell ! Be God, whose power's  
Infinite, love and grace deific, ours !



## P R O E M.

---

THIS time is equal to all time that's gone  
Of like extent, nor heeds to hide its face  
Before the future : each is missioned here  
To ends like worthy of its sender, God.  
Him therefore let us bless too, and take heart ;  
All ages are his offspring, and all worlds  
Form from his breath, like dewdrops out of air ;  
He life in all infusing. Nor is earth's orb  
Outlawed or excommunicate. This our God  
Is still as kind, his gifts like wondrous fair,  
Unlimited, even as when the wind first blew.  
Still shines his sun on the grey rotting rock  
Keen, pure, as o'er the primal matter once ;  
Ere floods, marmoreal now, had smoothed their couch  
Of perdurable snow, or granite wrought  
Its skyward impulse from earth's hearth of fire  
Up to insanest heights ; or thunder oped  
His cloudy lips, and spake. Immutable he,  
All things to himwards, spiritual, natural, show  
Unvaryingly of change. God, nature, man,  
Life's universal Trinity, man perceives  
Aye to each other that they have been ; all souls  
God makes, we feel, he blesses and inspires  
With special gifts, duties and joys, that each  
Teaching themselves and others him may learn.  
To those come gifts to enjoy the world, to gain,  
To cultivate, amuse, adorn ; to these,  
Who live alone with God and nature ; smile  
With the sun for mirth, or with the waning moon  
Sadden, the elements their kin as men,  
Boons, too, unasked, unmeasured as the light,  
Which lights at countless points the formless whole.

Such now, heaven's seers, in things eternal taught,  
Skilled soulwise to lay bare the heart of the world,  
Know that while elemental change, locked round  
In self-succedent course, may nature serve

As God, in spirit; progress alone of soul  
 Is to him dear as its existence; know  
 The moral realm in us expansible, ever  
 Greatening with speed accumulative, the rays  
 Of heaven's authentic sphere pierce more and more  
 The obstructive dark of ignorance; know, in fine,  
 This age, ours, happier, amiabler than all  
 Passed, in that God who witness lacks not ever  
 His ways to vindicate, now breathes 'mong men  
 More of his own humanity; and earth  
 Mellowed by westering suns, her teachers teach  
 A broader kindlier message; show how need,  
 Sown in our nature for divine commune,  
 Trust in a holy future largelier planned  
 Than doubtful pride deems safe to trust; though all  
 Schemes fruit of noblest strain, and social life  
 Made saintly, art supreme fine earth to gas,  
 Or desiccate the sea to a vapoury film;  
 A future filled by faith,—supplanter not  
 Of reason but supplementer, tends to adjust  
 And perfect Being; and while with simplest fare  
 Content themselves,—for wisdom's board aye lacks  
 Mere dainties, nor to any sets she forth  
 More than her homely bread, sweet olives, wine,  
 Right hospitable, and sacred salt, a meal  
 Such, with God's blessing, they their best meed find  
 To spread her stintless welcome, and invite  
 All blameless spirits to share the feast of God.

Each race hath had its revelation here  
 Through saint or bard, or lawgiver moved of God,  
 And will have better. Man, in spirit one,  
 Shall in the spirit receive the only true.  
 Who now the world's wide scripture, God writ, best  
 Interpret, the interlinear version use  
 Of spiritual light, given in ourselves, inspired;  
 Poesie being a thing divine, of God,  
 Who made his prophets poets; and the more  
 We feel of poesie, we become like God  
 In love and power creative; under-makers.  
 And song being of the supernatural  
 Natural utterance, solely can the world's  
 Unbounded beauty speak; immortal soul's  
 Perfective fall; terrestrial tests; re-rise;  
 And the premortal concords of pure mind,  
 Made, and creative, show, at last resumed.

True fiction hath a higher end, and scope  
 Wider, than fact: it is nature's possible,  
 Contrasted with life's actual mean, and gives  
 To the conceptive soul, an inner world,  
 A loftier, ampler heaven than that wherein

The nations sun themselves. In that bright sphere,  
 Behold the mental creatures of the men  
 Whose names are writ highest on the rounded crown  
 Of fame's triumphal arch; the shining shapes  
 Which star the skies of that invisible land,  
 Where earthly immortality dwells, with sage,  
 Hero and seer, her sceptred lieges, bard,  
 And all souls vowed to truth. Among such, let ours,  
 Whom fabulous wars, nor wars too true, nor rise  
 Of realms, or fall, nor thrones o'erthrown allure,  
 One spirit, as with the elements of mind's orb,  
 Stern quatrain of the moral world, good, ill,  
 Choice and necessity, battling, sing; the field,  
 And what we are deepliest mixed with, God and man,  
 Boots most to know,—where God the all good, the world's  
 Evil, and man, in whom are both,—all said  
 Of Deity's said in reverence, and in love,—  
 Deploy their forces. These, thought's ultimate forms,  
 In mutual bearings traced, all teach us, good  
 Immortal, as of God; for God to know  
 In nature, nature know in God, unites  
 Both reason and faith; teach, evil here active, there  
 Passive, but test of spirits; and choice and need,  
 Like light's electric force, twin poled in us  
 And all life; teach, that we our being have,  
 We of this mortal mixture, in the same law  
 As heaven's intelligences, of all ill pure,  
 And the dread Hadean shades; law given of God  
 Himself to prove by arbitrary grace  
 Above necessity in his action; teach,  
 Virtue, because of origin in him,  
 Deathless, divine; and while to struggling man,  
 For voluntary offence punishment just  
 Be due, renewal righteous of pure will,  
 And self-amendment, his approval secures;  
 Souls virtuous are the souls elect of God;—  
 And virtue and reason, attributes divine,  
 Not finite, but his qualities, though in us  
 By causal distance dwindled, proof proclaim  
 Of common Being in all divinity.

Now, that infinite wisdom when he freed  
 Soul, should soul's choice foresee needs all must judge;  
 While such preview infallible, act nor thought  
 Of ours irremediable implies. Who views  
 Reverently God's nature in itself, will own  
 He only hath free-will whose will is fate;  
 Know too that in humanity, Godwards viewed,  
 Free-will is but necessity in play;  
 The clattering of the golden reins which guide  
 The thunder-footed coursers of the sun.

But that soul create, seen self-wise, in all deeds,  
 In all our words, our wills, through this brief life,  
 This petty segment of eternity, though  
 Seized but of limited freedom, yet, in truth,  
 Even as the ship, with fire informed, that seeks  
 The sea, obeying but its own iron force,  
 Reckless of adverse tide, breeze dead, or weak  
 As infant's parting breath too faint to stir  
 The feather held to it; and howbeit at last,  
 Appointed thrall as much of the elements  
 As the white-bosomed barque which woos the wind  
 To her welcoming breast, is rightly for its course  
 Prejudged responsible; course and end alike  
 Chosen by us, and planned, and well, if laden  
 Not inconsistently. But who, because  
 Men know not, nor can see act's end, until  
 We see with God, shall deem, that man, set he  
 His heart, contrarious as he may, 'gainst God,  
 Can aught do but work out his ultimate will,  
 Though at an infinite angle, he thenceforth  
 Acting unanswerably,—and thus confounds  
 The law of being with doing, deepliest errs.  
 Laws there are twain man serves: the law of law,  
 Race, custom, creed, time, conscience, circumstance,  
 Chance; superficial this; who breathe the light  
 Of spiritual virtue know God's will towards good  
 The law of laws; all central, vital. These  
 To imblend by holy art, to cultured man  
 All excellence, and all blessing means. Who join  
 With love sincere of truth, good deeds, good will,  
 Just life and innocent conscience; 'scaping so,  
 The world's self-sentenced thralldom to desires  
 Inequitable, and selfish pride to outvie,  
 And not by bettering, serve, men; reunite,  
 In free perfection, with divinity here.  
 Such are heaven's secret heirs, the adopt of God,  
 Unknown, unnamed, unblazoned. These be they  
 Whose souls though chastened aye yet chose from first,  
 Born of the eternal seed of heavenly life,  
 Light's golden generation, into time  
 Breathed Godwise, God translates to bliss divine,  
 The primal, final, total state of heaven,  
 And normal perfectness in him. But while  
 God's boundless and predestinating love  
 Shown in the soul world-chosen, his power displays,  
 His sovereignty, his freedom, God's great end,  
 Touching all moral being, its progress just  
 In virtue and judgment by the pure plain law  
 Of right and truth, like needful seems to prove  
 Heaven's equity, and to separate good from ill.

Evil and good are God's right hand and left.  
There is but one great right and good ; ill, wrong,  
Dense, vast, howbeit to finite mind, to him  
Omniscient, shadows show, not substances.  
Nothing can be antagonist to God.  
Let contest be 'twixt equals. He is all.  
Not less, to us, of limited potencies  
By ministry of evil,—whose reason sole  
Of being, is that it prove, conscious or not,  
Promoter of God's ends, in testing souls  
Finite, but free, for good,—good stands forth clear.  
God ever makes for bliss twofold, his own,  
And theirs he hath made, all life : no meaner end  
Worthy of him can be, or just towards them.  
Who read not in the blessed belief that souls  
All may be saved, read to no end. We were  
Created, to be saved. We are of God.

Swayed by these truths, and compassed, as by stars,  
Earth in her course, our story, mingling life,  
Not cursorily, with things on high, but scenes  
Showing of heaven and earth, as body and soul  
In our humanity, mixed, we thankful, learn  
How God by ever creating, and his own  
One Being diffusing through the sentient whole ;  
How, too, by ruin of evil, and good's great field  
By finite force for God won, for that cause  
Tried, tested, and when failing, made in the end  
Just, pure ; he doth eternize bliss, and make  
Good infinite by making all in him.  
Our thoughts are bounded but by the infinite.  
What comes before and after the great world,  
Deep in light's secretest abyss, and life's  
Immensity most reserved, is ours to muse,  
Not to declare ; where finite reason ends  
Faith leaps, and finds firm ground in the divine.  
God, thus, our Saviour, still with spirit humane  
Communes ; with some in life-long sacrament,  
Faithwise ; which, rounding all activities  
Of soul, a higher faculty than reason  
Shows, though of brightest revelative power,  
As the snow-headed mountain riseth o'er  
The lightning, and applies itself to heaven ;  
A faculty which meaning gives to time ;  
Sanctity to man's kingly blood ; and like,  
And equal, interest in God's bounteous ends.  
Wherefore the world, of mean believings sick  
And sophistries, waits, wearying for the truth,  
Now, like an angel, on the wing from heaven.  
For as when, storms gone, each cloud-ghost, vapoury, vast,  
Each shape, sky-menacing, the uneternal brood

Of misconceptive fear, by ministering wind  
 Routed, and hurled to absolute void ;—we, strewn  
 Luxurious, on the crag's crown, nought thence seen  
 Save ocean's quivering outline, sharp as death,  
 Cutting the horizon of the after world,  
 And all heaven's luminous and exhilarant blue,  
 Eternity made visible, which o'erhangs  
 Changeless, this changeful sphere,—complacent, eye  
 Those unimagined heights, aërial, calm,  
 Of tempests hidden, not touched ; so, once earth's creeds.  
 Foul, foolish, or of mountainous falsity,  
 Fled from the face of never mutable truth,  
 One, indivisible, sole, we feel in this  
 Like verity, God's infinite fatherhood,  
 A faith, if formless, boundless, and the soul  
 All satisfying with permanent peace. The world  
 Is God's great will in act, heaven in repose.  
 Earth is heaven's floor ; and as, of time's vast shows  
 Or small, our God,—the omnipotent operative,  
 World sire, the all parent, first and last of Being,  
 Whose eye-blink kindles suns, whose breath in sad  
 Reproof congeals, imbreasts, doubt not, of all  
 The eternal image ; and, as in temporal wise,  
 The sun, sole habitant of the tented sky,  
 Lightener of all the planets, world adored,  
 Who yet with minute beauty all life's fields  
 Impearls, and things most momentary sublimes,  
 Still dwelling in each fairy orb of dew,  
 Ere to his breast he assumes ; so, too, the bard,  
 Who heavenly objects owns with earth's, while light  
 And beauty scattering over all he loves  
 And feels with, trusts but to himself all hopes,  
 Artwise, of lasting record in man's mind.

Art is man's nature ; nature is God's art.  
 All nature in the poet's heart is limned  
 In little ; as now in landscape-stones we see  
 The swell of ground, green groves, and running streams.  
 Fresh from the wolds of Chaos ; hints of life,  
 Foreworldly, pencilled by pre-solar light,  
 Or Paradisal sun ; so, in his mind  
 Ingrained, in primal purity, the main  
 Conditions of existence, be and bear,  
 Wisdom he seeks not only for himself,  
 But sacred rites participates in, which give,  
 To souls like willed, the privilege he hath earned,  
 And all prepared makes partners of his light.  
 'Twixt priestly powers and laic stands the bard,  
 A living link ; now chanting odes divine,  
 Now, holy and austere, with sacred spell  
 Inviting angels ; with fine magic, fiends

Evoking ; whiles, in festive guise, his brow  
With golden fillet bounden, earnest alone,  
The throng to charm that seeks, or celebrates,  
The games, here, there, the mysteries of life,  
With truths ornate, and pleasure's choicest plea.  
Man's minion thus, and monitor, though all else  
Be mute, he, armed with the instinct both of rule  
And right, in privilege only potent speaks  
His spirit in self-rewarding song. So, ours,  
Who from his youth up, save in adorning this,  
His life's chief business, mission, end, with all  
Fair addings ; and who all time brought, so brooked  
As to his soul's intent subservient, knew  
Elsewise, scant joy ; but this achieved, enough :  
Even as the ormer, pearly ear o' the sea,  
Whose aim nor tide nor tempest shakes, but shapes ;  
Who, taught by orient suns and vesper skies,  
Where steers the crescent star her silvery ark  
O'er azure deeps, gold rippled,—many a year  
Splendidly toiling, his mysterious shell,  
Born of himself, a life-long miracle, gifts,  
Daily, with goodlier dyes and tenderer hues ;  
In bulk, in beauty vastening aye ; he, now,  
The quivering rose-blush kindles, now, the blue  
Haunts as with memory of some flame-plumed wave  
Horsing the seas by night, adventurously,  
Lone, errant ; or of ruddiest lightning snatched  
While diving ; now with prisms pencil fires  
Finelier, the green of travelled seas, surcharged  
With tropic sunsets ; now the iceberg's spell  
Which binds the enchanted rainbow in its breast  
Steals holily ; but, chastened every gleam,  
Each soft ubiquitous flash fused flickering ; whilst  
Vanishing, fixed ; till at last one master tint,  
Thinned to a thought, all hues commuting, shot,  
Quick, through the whole, his lonely life-work he  
Indifferently perfects ; and moon by moon,  
Known but to silence and the all-aidant God,  
Lives self-imparadised. So tasked, his time,  
Our bard, like minded nature's ends and heaven's  
To accomplish, passed ; for man and nature, each,  
Give signals of perfections not in them  
Inherent ; part prophetic, part reflex ;  
Blind rudiments, hap, of qualities divine  
Originally ; our poor mean force, of power  
Boundless ; our cunning and coarse art, of skill  
Heaven's plenary inbreath fills and fines ; our ends  
Finite, of the universal cause ; in him  
We, as in nature, not through Being, alone,  
But operation, like exemplified. Think !

God worketh slowly ; yea, a thousand years  
He takes to lift his hand off that he hath made,  
When seemingly most finished. Layer on layer,  
Laid as by fingers skilled in lengths extreme,  
And thrilled progressive through all elements,  
He formed earth ; fashioned, balled, and hardened it,  
Into the great, bright, useful thing it is ;  
Water he heired with marl, flame stilled by stone ;  
Its seas life-crowded, and soul-hallowed lands,  
He, with the sun's broad girdle that sets aglow,  
Like love's embrace close clinging as for life,  
Earth's orbèd breast, girt ; fanned with tempests ; veiled  
With nebulous ocean clouds, now bright, now dark ;  
With virgin gold veined, dusted thick with gems ;  
Lined it with fire ; and round its heart-fire bowed  
Rock-ribs unbreakable ; until, whole at last,  
Earth took her shining station, as a star,  
In heaven's dark hall, high up the throng of worlds.  
All this did God, and thus. Nor, meanly, blame  
Man, mediator 'twixt the whole and God,  
Who causes like in essence, if diverse  
In value would collate ; nor this conceive  
Extern to that most in us, the divine  
And universal reason of things ; but own,  
That even as when in summer's sultriest heats,  
At night, o'er heaven, the harmless flash looms wide,  
With faint, far fulminings, and we learn, all day  
We have breathed invisible lightnings, and our breasts  
Arched on unvolumed thunder ; so, once taught  
Clearly in spirit, to realise our own  
Uncredited divinity, we first feel  
True consciousness of life, as filled, sphered, skied,  
With Deity. Be it aye so. For aught else,  
Most rests with those who read. A work, a thought,  
Is that each makes it to himself, of great  
Dark meanings capable, rushing like the sea,  
In life shoals measurelessly ; may be, as air  
By the wild doves' wing beclouded, while they sweep,  
Miles broad, o'er western woods, with, here and there,  
Vast glimpses of heaven's central light ; or, nothing ;  
Bodiless, spiritless. Be but ours conceived  
With adequate force, and lo ! we add a star  
To the serene of heaven. And for man's soul,  
As shown in actual, and in ultimate times  
Foreshadowed, note the elements of such sphere,  
Feasible, in thought ; grace destinative, the strife  
Of good and ill, man's judgment of himself,  
And his heart's natural religion, God  
Contrasting with humanity, the spirit  
Uniting aye ; the test of virtue tried ;

Temptation, and its workings in the heart ;  
Ambition ; thirst of secret lore ; joy ; love,  
Riverlike, sometimes doubling on itself ;  
Adventure, travel, earthly and heavenly ;  
Friendship and pleasure, passion, poesie,  
Viewed ever in their spiritual end, and power ;  
Celestial happiness, and earth's foretaste  
Millennial ; ill, of God annihilable ;  
The angels lost, restored,—of him all made ;—  
Life pre-existent ; and like marvels, much  
Unnamed ; one visible remnant of pure faith,  
The soul incoronating, when most eclipsed ;  
Most nigh gone ; these, the mainland of our orb,  
Might form ; its isles, its seas. But if less vast  
Our soul-grasp, be content : the whole a fane  
Intelligible, conceive, the spirit which holds  
To whom, and his by whom, it is consecrate ;  
From whose porch, now through passed, is something seen,  
As in saintly shrine by Seine's blue wave, the shell  
Colossal, from seas southern shipped, since filled  
With waters purificative, immirroring, shows  
The main dome's pillared vast beyond,—of what  
At large succeeds ; the all-intempling law  
Of moral being, progressive good ; the course  
And scope of faith in the individual soul,  
With time's distractions, with the world's deceits  
Contestant, ere yet gained celestial life.



# FESTUS.

---

Behold us spiritwise in heaven ; unite  
In angel worship of the infinite God  
World destinate. Evil, all tempting, man  
Maligned, God vindicates himself, and prove  
Earth bettering through all ages, best the last :  
Ill's double attack permits, and names the strife  
Testful of evil and good that all shall close.  
The kind sweet offices hear of angel guard ;  
The privileged joys of chosen souls, which choose  
Themselves, in God, all goodness ; how perdures  
The spirit premortal and perfectible ; awed,  
The final doom of things terrestrial, learn.  
Yet while from time's broad chart the accumulate dust  
Sweeping of vast eternity, and to heaven  
Opening his boon design, God all foreshows  
Accomplished, grieves one angel still ; 'tis Earth's.  
An outline this of world-life which begun,  
Will end, and rightly, in heaven, and with God :  
God, too, i' the midst, substantive of the whole.

*Heaven.* DEITY. THE ANGELIC HIERARCHY. GUARDIAN  
ANGEL. ANGEL OF EARTH. LUCIFER.

*God.* Eternity hath snowed its years upon them ;  
And the white winter of their age is come ;  
The world, and all its worlds ; and all shall end.

*Seraphim, worshipping.*

God ! God ! God !  
As flames in skies  
We burn and rise,  
And lose ourselves in thee ;  
Years on years,  
And nought appears  
Save God to be.  
To us no thought  
Hath Being brought  
Towards thee that doth not move.  
Years on years,  
And what appears  
Save God to love ?  
All thou dost make  
Lies like a lake

Below thine infinite eye ;  
 Years on years,  
 And all appears  
 Save God, to die.

*Cherubim.*

As sun and star,  
 How high or far,  
 Show but a boundless sky,  
 So creature mind  
 Is all confined  
 To show thee, God most high.  
 The sun still burns,  
 The sun still turns  
 Round, round himself, and round  
 So creature mind,  
 To self's confined,  
 But thou, God, hast no bound.  
 Systems arise,  
 Or a world dies,  
 Each constant hour in air ;  
 But creature mind,  
 In heaven confined,  
 Lives on, like thee, God, there.

*Seraphim and Cherubim.*

Thou fill'st our eyes  
 As were the skies,  
 One burning, boundless sun ;  
 While creature mind,  
 In path confined,  
 Passeth, a spot thereon.  
 God ! God ! God !

*Angel of Earth.* I hear the beat of a strange, strong  
 wing in heaven,  
 Wild, inharmonious. Now it nears the throne.  
 It is the spirit of evil. Woe is me !

Woe to the earth, to man. What seeks he here ?

*Lucifer.* Ye thrones of heaven, how bright ye are, how  
 pure !

How have ye brightened since I saw ye first ;  
 How have I darkened since ye saw me last !  
 What 'vails hell's murk abyss of fire, that cave  
 Loathsome, of falsest oracles, where Ill's host  
 Endure, inflict, or plot perdition ; what,  
 Air's ravenous heights I reign over, and roam  
 Wreckful, tempestuous, with all lackeying plagues  
 Vaporously impomped ; in self-wrought agony, I  
 The while, misglorying 'gainst these seats serene,  
 On good based ; with the incense canopied  
 Of universal worship, echoing, round  
 Heaven's templ'd dome, God's sun-words, life-ful aye ?

Yet must I work through world and life my fate ;  
 And winding through the wards of human hearts,  
 Steal their incarnate strength. Death does his work  
 In secret and in joy intense, untold ;  
 As though an earthquake smacked its mumbling lips  
 O'er some thick-peopled city. But for me  
 Exists not peace nor pleasure, even here,  
 Where all beside, the very faintest thought,  
 Is rapture. I will speak to God, as erst ;  
 If wrong, no matter. Wrong's mine instinct now.  
 Father of spirit, as is the sun of air ;  
 Beginning of all ends, end of all means  
 Essential, through the infinite whole ; in whom  
 Eternity, and all other attribute  
 Perfect, of pure cause self-existent, is ;  
 Originator without all origin ; end  
 Without end ; precreator of all ages ;  
 Being, above all being, God the life ;  
 Maker and perfecter of all, the one ;  
 Thou too the way wherein the world proceeds  
 From God, all making, and whereby returns  
 The ever-generated universe ; thou  
 Who all worlds rulest in the law of light,  
 Thy nature and their own ; who art before  
 All ages, angels blessed times and worlds ;  
 Primal humanity of the Deity, self  
 Unfolding, emanant first of natures pure ;  
 And thou the Eternal Spirit of Deity  
 Sole sanctifier of things created ; thou  
 By whom, in part communion, separate soul  
 Identifies its source with God, and ones  
 Being and life and spirit ; who all dost make,  
 Destroyest, recreatest, makest God,  
 God, one and trine, thou seest me here again ;  
 Still, sunlike, though eclipsed, of blinding power,  
 And fiery cause, and everness of ill ;  
 Behold, I bow before thee. Hear thou me.

*God.* What wouldst thou, Lucifer ?

*Lucifer.* The world-apple  
 Shows dead ripe. It wants plucking. Touch it thou,  
 Or I, and lo ! the poor perfection falls.

*God.* What may to thee seem perfect, here in heaven  
 Far other showeth.

*Lucifer.* Man through ignorance, first,  
 And need of knowing, fell. Now, grown so wise,  
 He thinks he lacketh nothing ; no, not God.  
 Science so self-sufficient shows, she makes  
 Each day such vast advances through the world  
 Inly and outwardly, that even now she aims  
 Thee to dethrone ; and miracles all disproven

As fabulous breaches of eternal law,  
Not now nor ever possible, men to teach  
Her own more marvellous worship, and thenceforth  
Herself aye deify.

*God.* All things to know  
Subordinate even to law, precludes not faith  
Towards one who every law first made, first willed.

*Lucifer.* Faith I have missed from earth this many an age.  
Faith! Is she here?

*God.* Faith is both there and here;  
Participant of divine ubiquity.  
Thy knowledge is defective. Still on earth  
Are those who, knowing most, the most believe.

*Lucifer.* More like myself, who, knowing much, most  
doubt.

*God.* Perfected from the first by grace divine  
The heaven-born spirit and pre-immortal, fraught  
With luminous fulness, though a moment dimmed  
By sin, not tarnished, knowledge conciliates  
With wisdom; both with faith. Were I once more,  
Future as passed to test by proof of one,  
Or many, thou'dst fail as heretofore.

*Lucifer.* How fail?  
I deemed me passably successful there,  
In Eden once, and everywhere, since then,  
Where'er man's heart hath planned his Paradise.

*God.* To finite mind, divergent from the light  
Eterne, it doubtless seems so, But in sight  
Of spirits who stand concentric with all truth,  
Howbeit of bounded gaze, like these thy peers,  
Who loved thee once, loved, monished, mourned in vain,  
Thy failure shows foreordered and complete.

*Lucifer.* God I oppose; must, can opposition fail  
If foreordained? Then he appoints his own  
Failure in mine. Such failure seems success.  
Nought see I more. Can any further see?  
Let me accept the test. Or blessed, or cursed,  
All seems indifferent now, with thirst of power,  
Love, lore divine and human of all time,  
Been, being, or to be, nought made can quench,  
Save waters of celestial life which flow  
Hence, sunwards ever, a youth among the sons  
Of men, there is, I fain would have, given up  
Wholly to me.

*God.* I know him. He is thine  
To tempt.

*Lucifer.* I thank thee, Lord.

*God.* Upon his soul  
Thou hast no absolute power. All souls be mine  
For aye.

*Lucifer.* This means still, I may so torment  
With dubiety his conscience, ruining all  
Godward assurance ; so with pleasures ply  
Passions and creatural vanities, his heart  
Trained downwards ; with world-wisdom, and profound  
Knowledge of surfaces, so his spirit corrupt ;  
Make proud with gifts stupendous ; with all use  
Of mundane power inordinate, and forepledge  
Of superhuman privileges, his soul,  
That,—be it ! I leave to thee the absolute.

*God.* And I give thee leave to this that he may know  
My love than all his sin more ; and to himself  
While proving nought save God can satisfy  
The soul he maketh great, prove both to thee,  
And to the world, faith peer of knowledge.

*Guardian Angel.* Thanks  
For this, Lord ! endless thanks and ceaseless praise.  
To know at hand truth's trial, trust in thee  
Strengtheneth ; and proof of principle perfects  
Man's noblest resolutions for his own  
Or the world's weal, here, blessedly, at one.

*Lucifer.* Thou, God, art all in one. Thine infinite  
Bounds being. Thou hast said the world shall end.  
The world is perfect as concerns itself,  
And all its parts and ends ; not as towards thee.  
So man, unlikest, likest God of all  
Existence, thee resembleth as act, mind.  
In him of whom I ask, I seek once more  
To tempt the living world ; and then depart.

*God.* Time ceaseth. All the thousands of the chosen  
Called, counted, all the innumerable hosts of souls  
Of ages passed, their self-conditioned doom  
Fulfilling, hear, ye heavenly, on earth's end,  
And man's, my judgment. Mark this mortal soul,  
Many a long lustre working out his own  
Election, with success most variable,  
As seems ; all souls else struggling in the flesh,  
Alike with him, shall, by one choiceful act  
Contemporary with nature's end, their fate  
Freely decide ; and in faith's final fight,  
Spiritual, sole blessed, their meet reward attain.  
Who fail, fail not to expiate pains most just,  
Be sure, ere I, long-suffering, too, forgive.  
Who rightly choose make heaven ; bliss instant theirs ;  
Bliss ever. So shall mercy neither tax  
Grave justice with inequitable extremes ;  
Nor justice mercy lawless call, e'ermore.

*Guardian Angel.* Oh ! who hath joy like mine,—joy first  
by me  
Felt, when in dim eternity, far back,

From out thy boundless bosom, as a star  
 In the air, that soul was kindled, Lord, and given  
 To me through every age of world-life gone,  
 To guard and guide ; the while by spherul strains  
 Amidst heaven's depths hailed, we both at thy feet fell  
 In worship? joy of joys, now, e'er assured.

*Lucifer.* Vaunt not thyself nor aught too hastily.

*Guardian Angel.*

Peace

To you ye saints and angels let me speak ;  
 For ye, I see, rejoice with me. Ye know  
 What 'tis to triumph o'er temptation ; what  
 To fall before it ; how the young spirit faints ;  
 The virgin tremor, the heart's ebb and flow,  
 When first some vast temptation calmly comes  
 And states itself before the unequal soul,  
 For conflict not prepared ; prepared not even  
 To entertain its semblance ; as the sun  
 Low looming in the west, startles the wave  
 Of whimpering brook, which yet, its waters grown  
 Aortal 'mongst earth's veins, shall mainward pour  
 The riverine flood ; full many a broadening league  
 Of land o'ermantled. Than the Tempter's self  
 Can be no greater peril. Less the shame  
 Of yielding, more the glory of conquering,  
 In him, this soul elect, of Ill so sought.  
 Expert of time's accumulated tests  
 Till now, earth given, his crowning trial comes ;  
 With mine, I trust, his triumph. Know, ye saints,  
 From infancy through childhood up to youth  
 Have I this soul attended ; marked him blessed  
 With all life's sweet and sacred ties ; the love  
 Prayerful of parents, pride of friends, health, ease,  
 Prosperity, social converse with the good,  
 The gifted, and a heart all lit with love,  
 Like a summer sea aflow with living light.  
 Hopeful and generous and earnest ; rich  
 In commerce with high spirits of all time,  
 Knowledge and truth for their own divinest selves  
 Loving ; earth's deeds of glory tracking, now ;  
 Now conning wisdom's words, as, heaven inspired,  
 In bright effectual ray the mind they tinge  
 Of bard or sage, thenceforth for ever fixed.  
 Morning and eve he,—as some hermit rock  
 All earth's lone outguard, daily of the sea  
 Takes baptism, and in the elemental rite,  
 While over its head the tidal function pours  
 Full-handed, gladdens ; he, so, to serve his race  
 And strengthen him for best aims, in praise and  
 Constant, for good asked, granted bliss, with her  
 Joyed in commune. Thus, fraught with peace

And studious nights, star-armed, or moon-crowned,  
 In good, in joy, all radiantly elapsed ;  
 His grateful heart opening to the Lord of life  
 Our spiritual sun, flowerwise. All this, long while  
 I marked. A slow but palpable change at length  
 His spirit eclipsed, from what o'ershadowing sphere  
 Showed not to me ; and I a fall from good  
 Fatal and final feared.

*Lucifer.*

Regard me, friend.

Deem'st thou I roam the earth for nothing now ?

*Guardian Angel.* An aching wish to know the world,  
 I knew

Lorded, latewhile, his spirit ; ambition, love,  
 Eldest of things, that dawn life of the soul,  
 Youth's passionate pleasures and frivolities, all,  
 Had thrown cross-lights, and dazed his once so clear  
 Purview of life. Life's simple aims lacked zest.  
 God's love seemed lost upon him. Oh ! he grew  
 Heart-deadened. Watching, warning vain, I fled  
 Hither to intercede with God our Lord  
 To bless him with salvation. Plead we may  
 Always for those we love, by leave divine.  
 And now thou summ'st all bounties, Lord ! in him  
 Choosing as test of human faithfulness,  
 My ward, my charge. But, Lord ! thou knowest the mould  
 Of mortals, and the infinite end the souls  
 Thou savest are all predestined to in heaven.  
 So be thy mercy mighty to this soul  
 Fiend-threatened ; nor permit him, who presides  
 O'er hell's eternal holocaust, too far  
 To tempt or tamper with man's mutable heart.

*God.* My mercy doth all outstretch the universe.  
 Shall it suffice not for one soul ?

*Lucifer.*

God's wrath

Am I to myself ; and for that wrath inheres  
 In evil, am by him made to do my part.  
 Angel, do thou thine : they be far enough  
 Asunder.

*Guardian Angel.* Are the heaven-strung chords of  
 man's

Immortal spirit for thee to wreck at will ?  
 Bear witness all ye blessèd to the word,  
 Angels, intelligences, the sons of God ;  
 Ye who know nought but truth ; nought feel but love ;  
 Save bliss, will nought ; nought do save righteousness ;  
 Whose life was ere the heavens were yet conceived,  
 The stars begotten, or all the ages born ;  
 Ye first who move all heavens, in whose great names  
 God's name is rooted deepliest, though it live  
 Germwise in all light's hierarchies ; the crown,

Of Deity ; wisdom ; and the intelligence ;  
 Kindness and strength and beauty, splendour, worth,  
 Original and rule ; and numbered, known  
 Below by mystic seer of old, inspired,  
 Ye many ordered sanctities, God's love,  
 God's truth, God's justice ; majesty his, his might,  
 His dominance ; glory, knowledge, bliss ; all God's ;—  
 And ye who, restless mid perpetual peace,  
 Move watchful round the throne, ye burning seven ;  
 The virtue, power, salvation, fire and rest,  
 Blessing and praise of God ; ye all who rule  
 Regions, states, kingdoms, races, families, tribes,  
 Times, ages, seasons and cycles ; elements,  
 Systems and influences ; material powers  
 Mental and spiritual ; ye too who bear  
 Souls from the heavens to earth, from earth to heaven ;  
 Or ye whose life 'tis to present all souls  
 Reborn to their Creator ; or the skies  
 Golden-globed search for junctures grace may bless ;  
 Ye through whose ministry of mercy, his  
 Immediate, all sustaining, spirits and worlds  
 Are governed and made blessed ; ye who, the throne  
 Sought, stirless stand, joy-tranced, and on your Lord  
 Gaze, and in gazing gain divinity ; ye  
 Glad tenants all of the archetypal worlds,  
 And spheres intelligible ; and you, ye spirits  
 Freed once on earth into the privilege born  
 Of grace, God crowns all soul-redeemed with ; yours  
 Are the multitudes of testful stars ; yours power  
 For aye ; progressive joy ; ye are gods, and live,  
 Divine, with God ; bear witness all, that not  
 More surely bliss with godliness dwells and ones,  
 Than that, even spite of sin, man's purblind race  
 Might, and they would, with you, while awed and raised,  
 Recognise in time's scenes, though cloud-belts bar,  
 In provident mystery, half its burning disk,  
 The o'erruling power, through miracle tempering law,  
 Which by our creature purposes worketh out  
 Its deeds, and by our own deeds its purposes.

*Angels.* Devoted spirit, proceed ; bloom forth in act.  
 The powers of heaven are with thee, and with vast  
 Consent accept thy true, thy just appeal.

*Lucifer.* God, for thy glory only it is I act,  
 And for thy creatures' good. If lightning smite not,  
 Nor serpent fang to achieve thy bounteous ends,  
 I have lost since here the clue of things. Meanwhile  
 The more of death-chilled venom one can pour  
 Transfusive into careless nature's veins,  
 The more, mayhap, thou wouldst. When creatures stray  
 Farthest from thee, then warmest towards them burns

Thy love, even as yon sun-star hotliest beams  
On earth, when distant most, or seems.

*God.*

The earth

This soul indwells, this grain chose from life's sands,  
Dies with him ; fine and sum of miracles, this ;  
That spirit the most incredulous, demon, man,  
May know, who all doth, all sustains, can all  
Undo ; and every law sphere-based, withdrawn ;  
Each act of legislature divine, revised  
Perfective, by all Being's great Head, the whole  
Even yet may wholly cease.

*Lucifer.*

Lord ! now go I

To do thy will. So, he I have lighted on, seems  
Of the forechosen. But will their fate involve  
All men's ? And if all man's, creation's, too ?  
Knew I but this infallibly, not I  
Would thwart God's purposes, nor seek to wage  
War bootless with the Eternal of the heavens.

• *Guardian Angel.* Spirit depart, the secrets of the skies,  
God's counsels, it is not meet thou learn nor share.

*Lucifer.* All wisdom speaks his will ; all substance  
waits,

All power performs ; all spirits his ends fulfil.

*God.* Hearing he understands not that he hears,  
Nor seeing sees. Nought wists he perfectly  
Who loves not God.

*Lucifer.*

Heaven's oracles in heaven

Speechless, still doubt I.

*God.*

Who doubts only, exists

Vainliest. Thou, too, who watchest o'er the world  
Whose end I fix, prepare to have it judged.

*Angel of Earth.* Lord ! let me not then have watched  
o'er it in vain.

From age to age I have hoped, from hour to hour  
It would better grow, grow holier ; hope so still.  
Better it is than once—hath more of mind,  
Freedom, good willingness ; man's more man than erst.  
I love it more than ever. Thou gavest it me  
As a child ward. To me earth is as even  
To thee the boundless universe ; nay, more,  
For thou couldst make another. It is my world.  
Take it not from me, Lord ! Thou Son of God,  
Divine ideal of pure humanity ; word  
Whereby the eternal Reason with itself,  
And with the world communes ; word, safe to save  
All spirits impregn'd of Spirit Deific, thou  
Madest it the altar, whereon thou offeredst up  
Thyself for the creation. Let it be  
Immortal as thy love. And altars are  
Holy ; and sister angels, sister orbs

Hail it afar so titled. Oh ! I have seen  
 World questioned, comforting world ; yes, seen them weep-  
 Each other, if but for one red hour eclipsed.  
 And of all worlds most generous was mine own,  
 The tenderest and the fairest.

*Lucifer.* Knowest thou not  
 God's Son, God's own humanity wherewithal  
 The Maker suffereth evil, and partakes  
 The sorrows of the world he hath made, knows, loves,  
 Brother and friend of spirit everywhere ?  
 Or bound hast been to thy foolish world for aye ?

*Angel.* Star unto star speaks light, and world to  
 world

The password of all souls to God, the name  
 Of God in us, repeats, word reunitive  
 With Deity, worth all tongues in earth and heaven.

*Son of God.* Think not I have lived in, died for, thine  
 alone ;  
 And that no other sphere hath hailed me lord.  
 In teaching, judging, saving worlds is spent  
 Mine everlasting being.

*Lucifer.* And earth he next  
 Will judge ; for so saith God.

*Angel of Earth.* Be it not, Lord.  
 Thou art a God of love and goodness. He,  
 The evil of the universe, loves not earth,  
 Not man, thy Son, nor thee.

*Lucifer.* Love I not earth,  
 Fair earth, well-zoned ?

*Angel of Earth.* Thou knowest best, Lord.

*Lucifer.* Behold  
 Now, all yon worlds. The space each fills shall be,  
 And that right soon, its successor. Accept  
 The trivial consolation.

*Angel of Earth.* Earth, O Earth !

*Lucifer.* It is earth shall head destruction. She shall  
 end.

The worlds shall wonder why she comes no more  
 On her accustomed orbit ; and the sun  
 Miss one of his apostle lights ; the moon,  
 An orphaned orb, shall seek for earth for aye  
 Through time's untrodden depths, and find her not.  
 No more shall morn, out of the holy east,  
 Stream o'er the amber air her level light ;  
 Nor evening, with the spectral fingers, draw  
 Her star-sprent curtain round the head of earth ;  
 Her footsteps never thence again shall grace  
 Heaven's blue, sublime. Her grave—Death's now at work—  
 Gaps deep in space. See tombwards gathering all  
 The stars, in long procession, sad, night-clad ;

Each lights his funeral brand, and ranks him round.  
 And one by one shall all yon wandering worlds,  
 Whether in orbèd path they roll, or trail,  
 Gold-tressed, in length inestimable of light,  
 Their train, returnless from extreme space, cease ;  
 The sun, bright keystone of heaven's world-built arch,  
 Be left in burning solitude. The stars,  
 As dewdrops countless on the æthereal fields  
 Of the skies, and all they comprehend, shall pass.  
 The spirits of all the spheres shall all depart  
 To their great destinies ; and thou and I,  
 Greater in grief than worlds, shall live as now.

*Angel of Earth.* Thou knowest not the to-come.

*Lucifer.* Who knows ? 'Tis safe,  
 For all that, to predict woe. Woe impends  
 Always.

*Son of God.* In hell's dark future that is writ  
 Shall amaze yet man and angel.

*Angel of Earth.* Spirit, hear !  
 All heaven at thee shall peer.

*Lucifer.* There, to thy earth.

*Angel of Earth.* There's a blind world, dislumined late  
 of God,  
 Smote into blackness thrice of darkness, such  
 As spreads where light, God's shadow, not is ; by storms  
 Of stars meteoric wrecked ; and by base force  
 Invert, of dissolute elements, dragged to the verge  
 Of chaos, rolling round space utmost. There,  
 The outcast of all being, good alone  
 Lacking from every rudiment of things,  
 Reigns ruin permanently ; disaster sows,  
 Decay reaps ; naught aught fits ; that, fit for thee  
 If fit to be promoted out of hell—  
 Be thy world. Leave, leave me the lifeful earth ;  
 Home, shrine of every virtue, every law  
 Spatial or spiritual God hath given the world.  
 Stretch forth thy shining shield, O God ! the heavens  
 Over the prostrate earth, an armèd friend,  
 And save her from the swift and violent hell  
 Her beauty hath enchanted ; from the woe  
 Of love like his, Oh, save her, though by death.

*Lucifer.* Go tell the earth, I come.

*Angel of Earth.* Tidings of ill  
 Announce, thyself. Be thine own fiend-spell, thou.

*Son of God.* O'er all things are eternity and change  
 And special predilection of our God.

Thou, Lord, who souls createst as the sun clouds  
 From the sea of spirit, Sire, thou, of man thy Son's  
 Spiritual and bodily nature both ; in whom  
 Maker and made one Being make divine ;

Free, mediative ; who aye in every world  
 Payeth creation's penalties, the fines  
 Of imperfection, ignorance, and the sins  
 Such weakness leads to, and the original lack  
 Of all consummate qualities ; yet in all  
 Is heir of God and nature, and in thee  
 Attenuating Deity with humanity, lives  
 Ever and equality claims supreme in heaven  
 With all divinity, thrice being purified ;  
 And you, blessed spirits regenerate now from taint  
 Of ill-directed will, for whom—to prove  
 God's self-exception arbitrary from law—  
 He hath founded for the world, from the first called,  
 First chosen ; and you the unnumbered throng to be  
 Last in the infinite proof of spiritual life's  
 Probational advance all time ; for whom  
 All heaven the fulness of its bliss reserves ;  
 Creator and created, witness, both,  
 How I have loved ye, as God-natured life  
 Can only, and suffer, not annulled. Let earth,  
 And every orb, offspring of fire-fraught space,  
 Perish materially : while lasts in spirit  
 Creation's evil, prince of the world, 'gainst good  
 Thine it will be to strive, I know ; and though  
 Not I, nor nature, wholly, neither, void  
 Of the holy spirit prophetic, wist the end  
 Of Being, yet fear I not for good's success  
 Final, or in the skies, or earth's broad field,  
 Or in these lists, delimited of one soul.

*God.* Earth, when her Sabbath ends, in the high close  
 Of order, shall not be.

*Lucifer.* Now, heaven, farewell !  
 Hell seems less terrible than is nothingness.

*God.* Destruction and salvation are two hands  
 Upon Being's face. When both unite, at close  
 Of time's course hourful, death's dark day begins,  
 Which yet shall dawn. Each orb to its end prefixed  
 Exists ; and earth, my creature, the elect  
 Of worlds, ere all death stricken, but passed through fire,  
 Renewed, made pure past primal innocence,  
 Is saved. The world shall perish like a worm  
 Upon destruction's path ; the universe  
 Evanesce as a ghost that scents the sun,  
 Yea, like a doubt before the truth of God ;  
 Yet nothing more than death shall perish. Then,  
 Rejoice ye souls of God regenerated,  
 Ye indwellers divine of Deity, know  
 In him ye are immortal as himself.

*Angel.* So shall the All in All be all in One.

*God.* Know, angel-guard, thy charge from first or-  
 dained

To prove his faith in God, that ultimately  
 Wide fields of blessed salvation may be reaped  
 Timely. Go, search the scroll of fate, thou wilt find,  
 Writ in that holy and everlasting word,  
 This soul forechosen, long tested, simpler made  
 By wisdom, by rise humbler in belief,  
 Outwaked doubt's night, revert in worthship here.  
 And though so largely he knew, and all with him,  
 Of nature's source, at last, the birth of things,  
 Creation's laws and principles; knowledge gained  
 Gradually, by wise behest; not less he loved,  
 Not less believed, than when, in earlier years  
 Of inscience, Auz' afflicted patriarch clave  
 To my name submiss, in me self-justified.  
 Heaven's secret this, till I permit, reserved,  
 Even from himself, and he of man's race last.

*The Holy Spirit.* And lo! I hallow him to the ends of  
 heaven,  
 That though he plunge his soul in sin, like a sword  
 In water, it shall nowise cling to him.

Souls are of God. All ends are known in heaven  
 Ere aimed at upon earth. The child is chosen.

*Saints.* Another soul the All-Holy One  
 Hath chosen out of perishing earth;  
 And when is done the life begun  
 Throughout the whole shall heaven see none  
 More joyful of the immortal birth.

*Guardian Angel.* How is thy secret love adorable ever,  
 Sole amiable, in whose eternal plans,  
 Things not yet made re-rise, and sacred ends,  
 Momentous, vast, lie hidden in certainty  
 Transpicuous; howbeit nor seraph, saint,  
 Nor I, knew, till this instant, with all heaven,  
 That soul was saved. Praise God, ye blessed, with joy.

*God.* Nor he, nor any soul were saved, had not  
 The world's original evil, by my decree  
 From all time framed, been capable of use,  
 With good compatible. Evil is not a power  
 By one mind miscreate, malevolent grown,  
 Maugre my will, foisted into the world:  
 But of defectible nature born, were't not  
 Of greater ultimate gain than present grief,  
 To soul free, answerable, or than could else  
 Be, it had never been; rest sure. Let, now,  
 Yon erring, infidel spirit, in act as doom  
 Precipitate; there by angel eyeable scarce,  
 So swiftilier than the wind hath he down sped;  
 By me e'er seen through; who, deformity being  
 Essential, every fount of life with death  
 Embittereth, taints each separate birth with sin,

And the soul-world fouls with self ; so prompt to aid  
 Creation's foes, destruction, death—his worst  
 Dare ; yet shall God, before even reason create,  
 Show just ; and sin's sire, false and faithless, learn  
 Soul's progress due to free-willed strife 'gainst ill ;  
 Evil o'erruled to good, transmute to use  
 Most fit whereby to administer the world,  
 Spiritual ; imperfect caused ; but if without  
 Free-will, of Being's amplest dignity void,  
 How infelicitous ; nor amenable ye,  
 Intelligences, which people it. For not only  
 To me, free sovereign of free servants, 'longs  
 Necessity, but still holier liberty ; both  
 Offspring, twin-born of God, in whom abides  
 All fulness, sole, perfection. So, in fine,  
 Evil's constrictive knot from life's lithe limbs  
 Released, sin expiate and abolished, all  
 Shall with God's righteousness be satisfied.

*Thrones.* Thou, God, art Lord of Being, and thy just  
 thoughts

Are high above the star-dust of the world ;  
 The spheres themselves are but as glittering noughts  
 Upon these imperial robes, thy skies, impearled.  
 Life's thousand thrones, mid spaces infinite,  
 Beam joyous 'neath love's universal sight ;  
 We who thine ordered Thearchy divine  
 Set forth, who with thy glow effluxive shine,  
 We angel raylets gladden in thine interior light.

*Dominations.* Between creation and destruction, now  
 The lull of creatural action intervenes.  
 God rests ; and the world is working out its week.  
 His hand is in his bosom, and at peace.  
 But what was gradually create shall be  
 Most suddenly unmade. That arm which now  
 Slumbers upon his breast shall yet wave forth ;  
 And from the lightning pathway of his feet  
 The æthereal web, world-studded, of the skies  
 Like to the gossamer woof, beaded with dew,  
 Stretched o'er the morning traveller's walk, shall pass  
 Annihilate, and for ever. For behold !  
 His oath uncancellable on heaven's altar rests ;  
 The whole shall end. All matter, erst conceived  
 Of God the eternal, and the virgin void,  
 The firmament of material worlds, shall cease ;  
 By spheres may be replaced of spiritual light ;  
 But thee, who hold'st in thine all-moulding hand  
 The infinite as a ball, all worlds, or gross,  
 With elements, or to spirit refined, shall serve  
 Yea, o'er the universe aye omnipotent thou  
 As over meanest atomie, reignest Lord.

*Powers.* Thy might is self-creative, God : thy works,  
Immortal, temporal, or destructible, all,  
Ever in thy sight are blessed there. The heavens  
Thy bosom, o'er all existence stoops thine eye ;  
The worlds thy shining footprints show in space.

*Princedom.* Eternal Lord ! Thy strength compels  
the worlds,  
And bows the heads of ages ; at thy voice  
Their unsubstantial essence wears away.

*Virtues.* All-favouring God ! we glory but in thee.  
Ye heavens, exalt, expand yourselves. They come,  
The infinite generations, all divine  
Of Deity, come, our brethren, come, our friends.

*Archangel.* Thou who hast thousand names as night  
hath stars  
Which light thee up to mind finite, yet scarce  
Thy limitlessness illumine, nor that abyss  
Of Being, wherein thy wondrous attributes  
Themselves constellate, Lord ! thy light, the light  
We dwell in, shall at last, all times consumed,  
Fulfil the universe, and all be bliss.

*Angels.* Thee, God of heaven, of all, we praise,  
Through our ne'er sunseting days,  
And thy just ways, divine.  
In thine hand is every spirit ;  
Cleansing pain, and meed of merit ;  
All things souls and worlds inherit,  
Of thee all born, are thine.  
Not unto creatures be it given  
To scan the purposes of heaven,  
Always just and kind ;  
But before thy holy breath,  
All-quickenings where it operateth,  
Life and spirit, dust and death,  
The boundless all is driven,  
As clouds by wind.

*God.* Can God refuse this angel's innocent prayer ?  
Fate learn to reconcile thyself with joy.

*Angel of Earth.* Woe, woe, at last in heaven !  
Earth to death is given.  
The ends of things hang still  
Over them as a sky ;  
Do what, do how we will,  
All's for eternity.

*God.* Earth's angel-warden, lift thine head. Thy  
prayer  
Ungranted wholly, graceless yet falls not  
Back to its generous source. Thy love-task once  
Achieved, to guide that sphere's tempestuous life  
Through all vicissitudes, this reward be thine—

Thy ultimate hopes to know made truths ; its mien  
 Of beauty purified, she shall be known 'mong stars  
 By the name of Peace ; true end to godly strife  
 'Gainst evil, of good, which heaven with joy shall fill,  
 And calm delights inviolable of love,  
 Eternal, spiritual, love divine of God.

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## II.

From heaven, soul-like, to earth. It is sundown. Mark  
 The heart's state, empty and collapsed, the world's  
 Vain pleasures leave us in, dissatisfied,  
 Distraught, not penitent of them, in ourselves ;  
 Youth's natural fitful unavailing struggle  
 Note, 'gainst temptation come unlooked for ; power,  
 Love, wisdom ; who shall slight the three convened ?  
 To know man's future as a race ; the soul's  
 Passed, individually ; to be beloved  
 By the world's paramount beauty and sit earth's throne ?  
 Know yet, to sin is to curse God in deed ;  
 The soul, long used to truth, keeps fain, somehow,  
 Its strength, though plunged on sudden, mid the false,  
 As hands thrust into the dark, a season retain  
 Their sun-lent light. So now with this, the scene  
 Of self-forgetfulness, and of indecision  
 Breaks off, not ends.

*Wood and Water, lawn and flowering thicket bordering a lakelet. Sunset. FESTUS, alone ; afterwards LUCIFER.*

*Festus.* This is to be a mortal and immortal !  
 To live within a death-bound circle, and be  
 That dark point where the shades of all things round  
 Meet, mix, and deepen. All things show to me  
 Their dark sides. Somewhere must be truth-light.  
 Where ?

Oh ! I feel like to a seed in the cold earth ;  
 Quickening at heart, and pining for the air.  
 Passion is destiny ; the heart is its own fate.  
 It is well youth's gold so soon rubs off ; for soon  
 The heart gets dizzied with its drunken dance,  
 And life's voluptuous vanities enchain,  
 Enchant, and cheat no more. That spirit's on edge  
 Which nought enjoys sin's honeyed sting not taints ;  
 That soothing fret which makes the young untried  
 Unwise, unwarned, swift to forestall all dues,  
 Longing to be beforehand with their nature,  
 In dreams and liveness cry, they die to live ;  
 That wanton whetting of the soul which, while  
 It gives a finer, keener edge for pleasure,

Wastes more, and dulls the sooner. Rouse thee, heart.  
Bow of my life, thou yet art full of spring ;  
My quiver still hath many a purpose. Yet,  
Of all life's aims what's worth the thought we waste on't ?  
How mean, how miserable seems every care ;  
How doubtful, too, the system of the mind ;  
And then, the ceaseless, changeless, hopeless round  
Of weariness, and heartlessness, and woe,  
And vice, and vanity ! Yet these make life—  
The life, at least, I witness, if not feel.  
No matter, we are immortal. How I wish  
I could love men, for still, 'mid all life's quests,  
There seems but worthy one, to do men good.  
It matters not how long we live, but how.  
For as the parts of one manhood, while here,  
We live in every age ; we think, and feel,  
And feed upon the coming and the gone  
As much as on the now time. Man is one,  
And he hath one great heart. It is thus we feel,  
With a gigantic throb athwart the sea,  
Each other's rights and wrongs. Thus are we men.  
Let us think less of men—man fills not half  
The measure of man's mind—and more of God.  
Sometimes the thought comes swiftening over us  
Like a stray birdlet winging the still blue air ;  
Again it rises slow, like a cloud which scales  
Breathless the skies ; and, just overhead, upon us  
Down plunges ; we, with excess of witness, stunned.  
Sometimes we feel the wish across the mind  
Rush, like a rocket tearing up the sky,  
That we should join with God, and give the world  
The slip ; but while we wish, the world turns round,  
And peeps us in the face, the wanton world ;  
We feel it gently pressing down our arm,  
The arm we had raised to do for truth such wonders ;  
We feel it softly bearing on our side ;  
We feel it touch and thrill us through the body ;  
And we are fools, and there's an end of us.  
'Tis a fine thought that sometime end we must.  
There sets the sun of suns ; dies in all fire,  
Like Asshur's death-great monarch. God of might !  
It is power we love, and live on. Spirit's end,  
And reason of being, seems somewhat, if 'tis this.  
Mind must subdue. To conquer is its life.  
Why madest thou not one spirit, like the sun,  
To king the world ? And oh ! might mine have been  
That sun-mind, how would I have warmed the world  
To love, and worship, and bright life !

*Lucifer, suddenly appearing.* Not thou !  
Hadst thou more power—put case thou hadst thy wish,

'Tis vastly feasible—more wouldst thou misuse.  
But other matters first.

*Festus.* Who art thou, pray?  
It seems as thou hadst grown out of the air.

*Lucifer.* Thou knowest me well. If stranger to thine  
eye,  
I am not to thine heart.

*Festus.* I know thee not.

*Lucifer.* Come nearer. Look on me. I am above  
thee,  
Beneath thee, and around thee, and before thee.

*Festus.* Why, art thou all things, or dost go through  
all?

A spirit, or an embodied blast of air?  
I feel thou art a spirit.

*Lucifer.* Yea, I am;  
The creditable presentment of a man,  
I flatter myself I may be, too.

*Festus.* Thou art spirit.  
I knew it. I am glad, yet tremble so.  
What hours, what years, say, have I longed for this,  
And hoped that thought or prayer of force might win;  
How oft besought the stars, with tears, to send  
A power to me, and have set the clouds until  
I deemed I saw one coming; but ah! too soon  
The shadowy giant always thinned away,  
And I was fated unimmortalised;  
Unsceptred with the sway I would o'er souls.  
What shall I do? Oh! let me kneel to thee.

*Lucifer.* Nay, rise! and I'll not say, for thine own  
sake,  
That thou dost pray in private to the Devil.

*Festus.* Father of lies, thou liest.

*Lucifer.* I am he;  
It is enough to make the Devil merry,  
To think that men, me deeming dungeoned fast  
Ever in hell, call on me momentarily;  
Swearers and swaggerers jeer at my name;  
And oft indeed it is a special jest  
With witling gallants. Let me once appear!  
Woe's me! they faint and shudder; pale and pray;  
The burning oath which quivered on the lip,  
Starts back, and sears and blisters up the tongue;  
Confusion ransacks the abandoned heart;  
Quells the bold blood; and o'er the vaulted brow  
Slips the white woman-hand. To judgment, ho!  
The very pivot of the earth seems snapped;  
And down they drop, as when, in days of ire,  
Nations, revoltant at rank juggleries,  
Their sacred shrines wrack; here, a pillar falls

To its fluted knee ; a pediment there, that once  
 O'erbrowed the state ; and there, some delicate arch,  
 Whose marble arms, as petrified in prayer,  
 Long drew heaven's pitying glance, now rudest earth's,  
 Ruinous, dishallowed lies,—so these, so thou,  
 By anarch fears prostrated—to repent.  
 Such be the bravery of mighty man !

*Festus.* I must be mad ; or mine eye cheats my brain  
 And this strange phantom comes from overthought,  
 Like the white lightning from a day too hot.  
 It must be so. But I will pass it.

*Lucifer.* Stay !

*Festus.* O save me, God ! He is reality !

*Lucifer.* And now thou kneel'st to heaven. Fye,  
 graceless boy !

Mocking thy Maker with a cast-off prayer ;  
 For had not I the first-fruits of thy faith ?

*Festus.* Tempter, away ! From all the crowds of life  
 Why single me ? Why score the young green bole  
 For felling ? Go ! Am I the youngest, worst ?  
 No. Light the fires of hell with other souls ;  
 Mine shall not burn with thee.

*Lucifer.* Thou judgest harshly.  
 Can I not touch thee without slaying thee ?

*Festus.* Why art thou here ? What wouldst thou  
 have with me ?

*Lucifer.* 'Fore all I would have gentle words and  
 looks.

*Festus.* I pray thee, go.

*Lucifer.* I cannot quit thee yet.  
 But why so sad ? Wilt kneel to me again ?  
 This leafy closet is most apt for prayer.

*Festus.* Yes ; I will pray for thee, and for myself.

*Lucifer.* Waste not thy prayers ; I scatter them : they  
 reach

No further than thy breath—a yard or so.  
 And as for me, I heed them, need them, not.  
 My nature God knows and hath fixed ; and he  
 Recks little of the manners of the world ;  
 Wicked he holdeth it and unrepentant.

*Festus.* Therefore the more some ought to pray.

*Lucifer.* To blow  
 A kiss, a bubble and a prayer, hath like  
 Effect and satisfaction.

*Festus.* Let me hence !  
 Go tell thy blasphemies and lies elsewhere.  
 Thou scatter prayer ! Make me thy minister  
 One moment, God ! that I may rid the world  
 For ever of its evil. Oh, thine arm !

*Lucifer.* Canst rid thyself ?

*Festus.* Alas, no. Get thee gone !  
Can naught insult thee nor provoke thy flight ?

*Lucifer.* I laugh alike at ruin and redemption.  
I am the one which knows nor hope nor fear ;  
Which ne'er knew good, nor e'er can know the worst.  
What thinkest thou now can anger me, or harm ?

*Festus.* Wherefore didst thou quit hell ? to drag me  
there ?

*Lucifer.* Thou wilt not guess mine errand. Deem'st  
thou aught  
Which God hath made all evil ? Me he made.  
Oft I do good ; and thee to serve I come.

*Festus.* Did I not hear thee boast with thy last breath,  
Not to have known what good was ?

*Lucifer.* From myself  
I know it not ; yet God's will I must work.  
I come, I say, to serve thee.

*Festus.* Well I would  
Thou never hadst ; but speak thy purpose straight.

*Lucifer.* I heard thy prayer at sunset, scarce yet  
passed,  
Where, still, yon dim and filmy cloudlet, drooped  
Like to God's eyelid, thinned with unshed tears  
Of watching, over a worthless, faithless world,  
Screens the orb now vanished. I was there : was here.  
I saw thy secret longings, unsaid thoughts,  
Which prey on the breast like night-fires on a heath.  
I know thy heart by heart. I read the tongue,  
When still astutely, as well as when it moves.  
And thou didst pray to God. Did he attend ?  
Or turn his eye from the great glass of things,  
Wherein he worshippeth eternally  
Himself, to thee one moment ? He did not.  
I tell thee naught he cares for men. I came ;  
And come to proffer thee the earth ; to set  
Thee on a throne—the throne of will unbound—  
To crown thy life with liberty and joy ;  
And make thee free and mighty even as I am.

*Festus.* I would not be as thou art for hell's throne ;  
Add earth's—add heaven's.

*Lucifer.* I knew thy proud high heart.  
To test its worth and mark I held it brave,  
In shape and being thus myself I came ;  
Not in disguise of opportunity ;  
Not as some silly toy, which serves for most ;  
Not in the mask of lucre, lust, nor power ;  
Not in a goblin size nor cherub form ;  
But as the soul of hell and evil came I  
With leave to give the kingdom of the world ;  
The freedom of thyself.

*Festus.* Good ; prove thy powers.

*Lucifer.* Do I not prove them ? Who but I, that have  
Immortal might o'er mine own mind, and o'er  
All hearts and spirits of the living world,  
Would share it with another, or forego,  
One hour, the great enjoyment of the whole ?  
And who but I give men what each loves best ?

*Festus.* Open the heavens, and let me look on God.  
Open my heart, and let me see myself.  
Then I'll believe thee.

*Lucifer.* Thou shalt not believe  
For that I give thee, but for that I am.  
Believe me first ; then I will prove myself.  
Though sick I know thee of the joys of sense,  
Yet those thou lovest most I will make pure,  
And render worthy of thy love : unfilm them,  
That so thou mayst not dally with the blind.  
Thou shalt possess them to their very souls.  
Pleasure, and love, and unimagined beauty ;  
All, all that be delicious, brilliant, great,  
Of worldly things are mine, and mine to give.

*Festus.* What can be counted pleasure after love ?  
Like the young lion which hath once lapped blood,  
The heart can ne'er be coaxed back to aught else.

*Lucifer.* I will sublime it for thee all to bliss :  
As yet it hath but made thee wretched.

*Festus.* Spirit,  
It is not bliss I seek : I care not for it.  
I am above the low delights of life.  
The life I live is in a dark cold cavern,  
Where I wander up and down, feeling for something,  
Which is to be—and must be—what I know not ;  
But the incarnation of my destiny  
Is nigh.

*Lucifer.* It is thy fate which weighs upon thee.  
Necessity, like to the world on Atlas' neck,  
Sits on humanity. It is this ; nought more ;  
And the sultry sense of overdrawn life.

*Festus.* True ;  
The worm of the world hath eaten out my heart.

*Lucifer.* I will renew it in thee. It shall be  
The bosom favourite of every beauty,  
Even like a rosebud. Thou shalt render happy,  
By naming who may love thee. Come with me.

*Festus.* Power spiritual forbidden nor lowlier quest  
Me suiting, soon, as sweep o'er fertile fields  
Sea-bordering, deathful sands, so waste of life  
My spirit deformed, until, and I was glad  
My heart spake in me suddenly, and said  
Come, let us worship beauty ! and I bowed ;

And went about to find a shrine ; but found  
 None that my soul, when seeing, said enough to.  
 Many I met with where I put up prayers,  
 And had them more than answered ; some where love  
 Filled the whole place as 'twere oppressed with heaven.  
 And I worshipped, partly because others did ;  
 Partly because I could not help myself.  
 But none of these were for me ; and away  
 I went, champing and choking in proud pain ;  
 In a burning wrath that not a sea could slake.  
 So I betook me to the sounding sea ;  
 And overheard its slumberous mutterings  
 Of a revenge on man ; whereat almost  
 I gladdened, for I felt savage as the sea.  
 I had only one thing to behold—the sea ;  
 I had only one thing to believe—I loved ;  
 Until that lonesome sameness grew sublime  
 And darkly beautiful as death, when some  
 Bright soul regains its star-home ; or as heaven,  
 Just when the stars falter forth, one by one,  
 Like the first words of love from a maiden's lips.  
 There are points from which we can command our life ;  
 When the soul sweeps the future like a glass ;  
 And coming things, full-freighted with our fate,  
 Jut out, dark, on the offing of the mind.  
 Let them come ! ' Many will go down in sight ;  
 In the billow's joyous dash of death go down.  
 At last came love ; not whence I sought nor thought it ;  
 As on a ruined and bewildered wight  
 Rises the roof he meant to have lost for ever.  
 On came the living vessel of all love ;  
 Terrible in its beauty as a serpent ;  
 Rode down upon me like a ship full sail,  
 And, bearing me before it, kept me up,  
 Spite of the drowning speed at which we drave  
 On, on ! Was this not love ?

*Lucifer.* I know not, I.  
 Is't likely I can tell ? I am not in love ;  
 But I have oft-times heard mine angels call  
 Most piteously on their lost loves in heaven ;  
 And, as I suffer, I have seen them come ;  
 Seen starlike faces peep between the clouds,  
 And hell become a tolerable torment.  
 Some souls lose all things but the love of beauty ;  
 And by that love they are redeemable ;  
 For in love and beauty they acknowledge good ;  
 And good is God—the great Necessity.

*Festus.* I loved her for that she was beautiful ;  
 And that to me she seemed to be all nature,  
 And all varieties of things in one :

Would set at night in clouds of tears, and rise  
 All light and laughter in the morning : fear  
 No petty customs nor appearances ;  
 But think what others only dreamed about ;  
 And say what others did but think ; and do  
 What others would but say ; and glory in  
 What others dared but do ; so pure withal  
 In soul : in heart and act such conscious, yet  
 Such careless innocence, she made round her  
 A halo of delight ; 'twas these which won me ;—  
 And that she never schooled within her breast  
 One thought or feeling, but gave holiday  
 To all ; and that she made all even mine,  
 In the communion of love : and we  
 Grew like each other, for we loved each other ;  
 She, mild and generous as the air in spring ;  
 And I, like earth, all budding out with love.

*Lucifer.* And then, love's old end, falsehood ; nothing  
 worse

I hope ?

*Festus.* What's worse than falsehood ? to deny  
 The god that is within us, and in all  
 Is love ? Love hath as many vanities  
 As charms ; and this, perchance, the chief of both :  
 To make our young heart's track upon the first,  
 And snowlike fall of feeling which overspreads  
 The bosom of the youthful maiden's mind,  
 More pure and fair than even its outward type.  
 If one did thus, was it from vanity ?  
 Or thoughtlessness, or worse ? Nay, let it pass,  
 The beautiful are never desolate ;  
 But some one alway loves them—God or man.  
 If man abandons, God himself takes them.  
 I know not why love falters. Sense perchance  
 Of other's perfectness discourageth us.  
 However this, there came, between our twin stars,  
 A cloud, and when it lifted, this had set ;  
 That, mingled with heaven's day. It was even thus.  
 I said we were to part. She nothing spake.  
 There was no discord ; it was music ceased ;  
 Life's thrilling, bounding, glorying joy, ceased. Sate  
 Like a house-god, she, her hands fixed on her knee.  
 Her dark hair loose and long, the wild bright eye  
 Of desolation flashed through, lay around her.  
 She spake not, moved not ; more than act or speech  
 Her eye I felt. I came and knelt beside her.  
 And my heart shook this building of my breast,  
 Like a live engine booming up and down.  
 It is the saddest and the sorest sight,  
 One's own love weeping. But why call on God

This, now, or that decree, crude, as we think,  
Or cruel, to recast for us, or reverse,  
But that the feeling of the boundless bounds  
All feeling as the welkin doth the world ?  
Then first both wept, then closed and clung together.  
Then, like snow-wreath of peerless purity  
That upon mountain heights, by daily veer  
Of just one light-ray, loosening, line by line,  
Its hiddenest heart-hold, slowly absolves itself  
From all its haughty coldness, and seeks peace  
Even at the cliff's foot ; so she, white, by mine ;  
Weird, much unchanged, as seemed, in outward cheer,  
But love's preeminence lost in life, life lost.  
Never were beauty, love, and woe so wrought  
Together into madness, as that hour.  
Then comes the feeling which unmakes, undoes ;  
Which tears up by the roots the sealike soul,  
And lashes it in scorn against the skies.  
Twice did I madly swear, hand clenched, to heaven,  
That not even he nor death should tear her from me.  
Profane defiance 'twas, 'gainst each. Here, last,  
Upon this breast, she swooned ; here, midst these arms ;  
Here, cloudlike, poured she forth her love which was  
Her life to freshen this parched heart. In vain.  
Nor looked I e'er again on her alive.  
She wished, she said, to die. She wished ; she died.  
The lightning loathes its cloud ; such souls their clay.  
Can I forget that hand I took in mine,  
Pale as pale violets ? that eye where soul  
And sense met, like divine ? Ah no, may God  
That moment judge me when I do ! Oh ! fair  
Was she, her nature once all brightness, spring.  
And ominous beauty, like a maiden sword,  
Startlingly beautiful, whose dark flashes hide  
Deaths many, more triumphs. I see thee now.  
Whate'er thou art, thy spirit is in my mind ;  
Thy shadow hourly lengthens o'er my brain,  
And peoples all its pictures with thyself.  
Gone, not forgot, passed, not lost ; thou shalt shine  
In heaven, as even a bright spot in the sun.  
And now I am alone. Say on ! What more  
Can tempt save union of love with death ?  
But yester-eve it was she died, and now  
Scarce hath the spirit yet aspired to heaven.  
I feel it hovering round me. Let mine eyes  
But realize their faith, and I am thine.  
The soul first, then the body and the grave  
Are welcome or indifferent as may be.  
*Lucifer.* With those whom Death hath drawn I meddle  
not.

My part is with the living solely here.  
 I have not told thee half I will do for thee.  
 All secrets thou shalt ken—all mysteries construe;  
 At nothing marvel. All the veins which stretch,  
 Unsearchable by human eyes, of lore  
 Most precious, most profound, to thine shall bare  
 And vulgar lie like dust. The world within,  
 The world above thee, and the dark domain,  
 Mine own thou shalt o'errule; and he alone  
 Who rightly can esteem such high delights,  
 He only merits—he alone shall have.

*Festus.* And if I have, shall I be happier? Say  
 What's pleasure? What is happiness?

*Lucifer.* It is that  
 I vouchsafe to thee.

*Festus.* Am I tempted thus  
 Unto my fall?

*Lucifer.* God wills or lets it be.  
 How thinkest thou?

*Festus.* That I will go with thee.

*Lucifer.* From God I come.

*Festus.* I do believe thee, spirit.  
 He will not let thee harm me. Him I love,  
 And thee I fear not. I obey him.

*Lucifer.* Good.  
 Both time and case are urgent. Come. But see!  
 Nay; night hath one more marvel than the moon.

*Festus.* I glimpse the pale flash of an angel's wing,  
 But whose I see not, nor, though seer-born, know.

*Lucifer.* Spells too have I, thou knowest; and my ring,  
 The round horizon of the visible world,  
 Will hold a ghost or two. But what is this?  
 Superfluous were all evocation here.

No interruption, sure; no afterthought?

*Guardian Angel.* Spirit of Ill, who round the spherèd air  
 Roamest, thy interference ratified  
 By God's will, for the time my task annuls;  
 And I, by word supreme my charge resign.

*Lucifer.* Happy relief 'twere, doubtless for thyself,  
 And many a myriad like thee, angel motes!  
 Ye are a race superior far to doves;  
 Whiter in plume, and in the pen-feather  
 More potent, notably. Thy cure be mine.

*Festus.* I hear a mixed sound as of light and night  
 In shadowy conference.

*Lucifer.* It concerneth thee,  
 And yet thou mayst not know.

*Festus.* Be as it may  
 That, canst thou say me truly?

*Lucifer.* Wherefore not?

Falsehood and truth to me indifferent be ;  
 Nor more than that, this penal. Not to know  
 All things, so much still knowing ; to what end  
 The universe is tending, when fulfilled  
 Its spatial orbitation ; in what die  
 The metamorphic essence lastly cools ;  
 Nor how, in finite creature, good and ill  
 Should infinitely differ, forms the curse  
 And penalty all pay. I, most, whom Fate  
 Aye drives contrarious on the fiery lines  
 I break not, and which cannot bear me down.  
 I grow impatient of this goalless race,  
 Recessions and precessions : and this change  
 Of elemental atoms without end ;  
 Of self-paid dues, and plagues the world enjoys ;  
 And renovative ruin ; swarms of life  
 In the corrupting corse creation seems.  
 It is time that something should begin to end.  
 I have beheld the inflation of the world ;  
 And dogged the huge delusion ; I await  
 The cloudy wreck, trailed o'er the tract of time.

*Festus.* Where imperfection ceaseth heaven begins.  
 Where sin ends, bliss.

*Lucifer.* To thee mayhap is joy ;  
 Or ultimate or immediate, here or there.  
 But I who deathless seem to myself and live  
 With these world-shadowing skies life's primal form,  
 Life's final, like compeer, shall woeful hail  
 Woe's abrogation ; for if God saith—threat  
 To me, to all else promise—let all woe  
 Cease, cease I too with woe ; my total power  
 O'er being perforce then closed. But as the sun,  
 Opening with fiery key the locks of ice  
 Slow yielding, and from breasts of barrenness  
 A fruitful flood drawing that with new life  
 Redeems creation, endless store still leaves  
 Of frost unloosed, so, if to me, supposed  
 Evict from nature, God shall yet retain  
 The evil of mine own Being, it were enough  
 This sensible to eternize. I, meanwhile,  
 With doom unsure but menacing crowned, the round  
 Termless, of fixed finality to all things,  
 Myself except, and mine own sorrows, tread  
 E'er, and re-tread. To waste, to spoil's to live.

*Guardian Angel.* Do thou thy best, thy worst, thou  
 still art foiled.

And while ingriding even thy gravest wound,  
 Losest thine aim ; that wound is healed of death.

*Lucifer.* Art thou not hence, celestial sinecure ?

Instead of lolling on his shoulders, him  
Thou yet mayst see on mine.

*Festus.* Again I hear,  
As though some Titan cloud, gold-lipped, at ease  
Immense, held passing word-play with the sun.

*Guardian Angel.* Yet not in idlesse, holy though it  
were,  
Nor marble meditation, nor mere thought  
Of the supreme perfection,—thought alone  
Worthy the name of thought in soul create;  
The river homaging its ocean fount  
In every whispering wavelet—wrap I me;  
Far other aim be mine. Yes, he shall know  
The hidden extremes of nature; earth's, sea's, air's;  
The central fires; both world and wilderness  
Like tempting, though with diverse offering; power,  
Love, knowledge blent; nor—though by Ill devised  
To obscure God's truth, the consciousness of soul  
Ever existent; its individual source,  
Its universal end—shall all things prove  
But tests and purifiers; nay, thou thyself  
The evil of all things made, Ill's forceful soul,  
Naught else than foil of good.

*Lucifer.* Bereaved of thee,  
We may prepare to see strange sights indeed;  
Earth's polar linch-pins loosened, and the wheels  
Of light and dark that the world drags on, smashed.

*Guardian Angel.* I leave him, not desert: for, fortifie  
With the pure love of one, he God shall love  
For granting him that blessing. For the rest,  
In heaven's eternal archives all is writ,  
Pertaining to the mountain-thronèd end.  
I will prepare my loved one's destiny;  
And with my kindred angels smoothen his ways  
So among men, that he o'er all may cope,  
Throneworthy through all ages; hallowed, blessed;  
Born of the lofty lineage of the light,  
And gifted with the sceptre of a star,  
In state pre-temporal, fated to earth's end.  
Prophets shall preach of him, and wise men win,  
By secret power, the world to choose him chief;  
The universal faith impersonate.  
Peace to the soul-world, and the grand belief  
Wherein are blended truth and bliss, shall he,  
By aidance of the blessed, install on earth,  
Calmly at once, as heaven instates its stars.

*Lucifer.* Athwart this web, then, must I throw my warp.  
Can I not dim the intelligence with eclipse  
Of sagest-seeming doubt, owl-eyed to mark  
Small ills, of reason's light-broad world of good,

Noteless? With specious theories of the rise  
 Eterne of things, and end of temporal means,  
 His spirit confuse, and ravelling every thought  
 Inexplicably that shows God's simple will  
 Not chance, not mere development as cause  
 Of progress always heightening, better ever,  
 Than stand-point passed, God he may cease to see?  
 Can I not poison all the springs of life  
 And founts of feeling? friendship make a void,  
 And love a golden snare wherein his heart  
 Shall rage like a trapped lion? Hath wit power  
 To satisfy the soul, or power then wit  
 To save the spirit from despair?

*Guardian Angel.*

Ordained

To nobler ends than aught thou reck'st of, he,  
 As in time passed from all perfective rites,  
 From every test, soul-tried, shall wisdom win,  
 As flowers sweet sustenance from the invisible air,  
 And common elements.

*Lucifer.*

I mine own ends seek,

Not God's. Ordained or not, means nought to me.  
 Sin and be saved, can God's elect, if he  
 Elect be? Prove it, time. Love, knowledge, power,  
 These are my costliest baits; and on his path  
 Must these be spread. Distracted with delights  
 I know, too, let me fancy he escapes.

*Guardian Angel.* God's servant is man's master. So  
 shall rule,

One with heaven's spiritual sun whose light  
 Soul-quickenings, Being with truest life impregns,  
 The spirit I have all life tended on, endowed  
 Henceforth with plenar powers of virtual sight,  
 And sense extreme of primitive perfectness,  
 By him, all-ordering, the infinite One. And now,  
 Scion of life eterne, and ward of heaven,  
 Mine earthly charge, for a time farewell!

*Festus.*

What's that?

I saw a light, like earth-born lightning, shoot  
 Up, through night's infinite sanctuary.

*Lucifer.*

It was nothing.

*Festus.* Give me a breathing-time to fortify,  
 Within myself, the promise I have made.

*Lucifer.* Expect me, then, at midnight, here. Re-  
 member,

That thou canst any time repent.

*Festus.*

Ay, true.

*Lucifer.* Repentance never yet did aught on earth.  
 It undoes many good things. Of all men,  
 Heaven shield me from the wretch who can repent!

## III.

Follows a starry night  
 Where in the talk of man and spirit we see  
 Foreproven, the all-grasping mind's inordinate love  
 For marvels, mysteries, than for goodness more  
 Nay even for greatness. Miracles we must have.  
 Whence comes this dream of immortality  
 And the resurgent essence? Death is change.  
 But spirit's return, allowed of heaven, is now  
 To strengthen a fine but fainting faith, and show  
 Such change for better. Soul reborn, we see,  
 Stalls not in death; but like the polar sun,  
 One moment balanced on life's infinite verge,  
 Rises in roseate splendour to renew  
 Always a mightier day. The spell, as pledge  
 Of gifts to come and prouder privilege, works.  
 Man and his foe shake hands upon their bargain.

*Water and Wood. Midnight.*

FESTUS, alone.

All things are calm, and fair, and passive. Earth  
 Looks as if lulled upon an angel's lap,  
 Into a breathless dewy sleep: so still  
 That we can only say of things, they be.  
 The lakelet now, no longer vexed with gusts,  
 Replaces on her breast the pictured moon,  
 Pearled round with stars. Sweet imaged scene of time  
 To come, perchance, when, this vain life o'erspent,  
 Earth may some purer beings' presence bear;  
 Mayhap even God may walk among his saints,  
 In eminence and brightness like yon moon,  
 Mildly outbeaming all the beads of light  
 Strung o'er Night's proud dark brow. How strangely fair  
 Yon round still star, which looks half suffering from,  
 And half rejoicing in its own strong fire;  
 Making itself a loneliness of light,  
 Like Deity, where'er in heaven it dwells.  
 How can the beauty of material things  
 So win the heart and work upon the mind,  
 Unless like-natured with them? Are great things  
 And thoughts of the same blood? They have like effect.  
 Would one were here who could these knots unloose!

*Lucifer.* Why doubt on mind? What matter how we  
 call

That which all feel to be their noblest part?  
 Even spirits have a better and a worse:  
 For every thing created must have form;  
 Form meaning limitation. God, alone,  
 Is formless and illimitable mind.

Passions they have, somewhat like thine ; but less  
Of grossness and that downwardness of soul  
Which men have. It is true they have no earth ;  
For what they live on is above themselves.

*Festus.* There seems a sameness among things ; for  
mind

And matter speak, in causes, of one God.  
The inward and the outward worlds are like ;  
The pure and gross but differ in degree.  
Tears, feeling's bright embodied form, are not  
More pure than dewdrops, nature's tears, which she  
Sheds in her own breast for the fair which die.  
The sun insists on gladness ; but at night,  
When he is gone, poor nature loves to weep.

*Lucifer.* There is less real difference among things  
Than men imagine. They overlook the mass,  
But fasten each on some particular crumb,  
Because they feel that they can equal that,  
Of doctrine, or belief, or party cause.

*Festus.* That is the madness of the world—and that  
Would I remove.

*Lucifer.* It is imbecility,  
Not madness.

*Festus.* Oh ! the brave and good who serve  
A worthy cause can only one way fail ;  
By perishing therein. Is it to fail ?  
No ; every great or good man's death is a step  
Firm set towards their end, the end of being ;  
The good of all, and love of God. The world  
Must have great minds, even as great spheres or suns,  
To govern lesser restless minds, while they  
Stand still and burn with life ; to keep in place,  
Light, heat them. Life immortal do I seek,  
For aught, it were most to learn mind's mystery,  
And somewhat more of God. Let others rule  
Systems or succour saints, if such things please ;  
To live like light, or die in light like dew ;  
Either, I should be blessed.

*Lucifer.* It may not be.  
For as not the sun himself thou viewest, but only  
The light about him, like the glory ringed  
Round a saint's brow ; so, God thou wilt never see,  
Darkness of light radiative. Nor seek.  
His naked love were terrible. Saints dread more  
To be forgiven than sinners do to die.

*Festus.* Men have a claim on God ; and none who hath  
A heart of kindness, reverence, and love,  
But dare look God in the face and ask his smile.  
He dwells in no fierce light—no cloud of flame ;  
And if it were, Faith's eye can look through hell,

And through the solid world. We must all think  
 On God. Yon water must reflect the sky.  
 Midnight! Day hath too much of light for us,  
 To see things spiritually. Mind and Night  
 Will meet, though in silence, like forbidden lovers,  
 With whom to see each other's sacred form  
 Must satisfy. The stillness of deep bliss,  
 Sound as the silence of the high hill-top,  
 Where thunder finds no echo—like God's voice  
 Upon the worldling's proud, cold, rocky heart—  
 Fills full the sky; and the eye shares with heaven  
 That look, so like to feeling, nature's bright  
 And glorious things aye wear. There's much to think  
 And feel of things beyond this earth; which lie,  
 As we deem, upwards, far from the day's glare  
 And riot. They are Night's. Oh! could we lift  
 The future's sable shroud!

*Lucifer.* Behind a shroud  
 What should'st thou see but death?

*Festus.* Spirit; the thread  
 Sightless, whereon are strung life's world-great beads.  
 It may be here, I shall live again; or there,  
 In yon strange world whose long nights know no star;  
 But seven fair maidlike moons attending him  
 Perfect his sky; perchance in one of those;  
 But live again I shall, wherever it be.  
 We long to learn the future; love to guess.

*Lucifer.* The science of the future were to man  
 What the wind's shadow might be, sought he screen  
 From fire or flood. Save in the effect of act,  
 And the interlinkèd sequences of things,  
 Whereby to ourselves we make passed, present, coming,  
 There is no future. Why so fret this string?  
 Such thoughts are vain and useless.

*Festus.* Forced on us.

*Lucifer.* All things are of necessity.

*Festus.* Then best.

But the good are never fatalists. The bad  
 Alone act by necessity, they say.

*Lucifer.* It matters not what men assume to be  
 Or good or bad, they are but what they are.

*Festus.* What is necessity? Are we, and thou,  
 And all the worlds, and the whole infinite  
 We cannot see, but working out God's thoughts?  
 And have we no self-action? Are all God?

*Lucifer.* Then hath he sin and all absurdity.

*Festus.* Yet, if created Being have free-will,  
 Is it not wrong to judge it may traverse  
 God's own high will; and yet impossible  
 To think on't otherwise?

*Lucifer.* It may be so.  
All creature wills, and all their ends and powers  
Must come within the boundless scope of God's.

*Festus.* And all our powers are but weaknesses  
To what we shall have, and to that God hath.  
Doth not the wish, too, point the likelihood,  
Of life to come?

*Lucifer.* Boys wish that they were kings.  
And so with thee. A deathless spirit's state,  
Freed from gross form and bodily weightiness,  
Seems kingly by the side of souls like thine.  
And boys and men will likely both be balked.  
What if,—death after—spirit were loosed, like flesh,  
Into its elements? Hold yon worlds, man maps  
Constellate, fellowship in nature? Life,  
Mind, soul, as he hath planned, perchance no more.  
But sooth to say, I know not aught of this.  
I have no kind. No nature like to me  
Exists; and human spirits must at least  
Sleep till the day of doom—if ever it be.

*Festus.* Hast never known one free from body?

*Lucifer.* None.

*Festus.* Why seek then to destroy them?

*Lucifer.* It is my part.

Let ruin bury ruin. Let it be  
Woe here, woe there, woe, woe be everywhere.  
It is not for me to know, nor thee, the end  
Of evil. I inflict; and thou must bear.  
The arrow knoweth not its end nor aim.  
And I keep rushing, ruining along,  
Like a great river rich with dead men's souls.  
For if I knew, I might rejoice; and that  
To me by nature is forbidden. I know  
Nor joy in ill's success, such as elates  
Lesser malevolences; nor sorrow sours  
My soul at sight of heaven's unwearying love  
Manwards. With me through time, a changeless tone  
Of sadness like the nightwind's is the strain  
Of what I have of feeling. I am not  
As other spirits,—but a solitude  
Even to myself; I the sole spirit, sole.

*Festus.* Can none of thine immortals answer me?

*Lucifer.* None, mortal!

*Festus.* Where then is thy vaunted power?

*Lucifer.* It is better seen as thus I stand apart  
From all. Mortality is mine—the green  
Unripened universe. But as the fruit  
Matures, and world by world drops mellowed off  
The wrinkling stalk of Time, as thine own race  
Hath seen of stars now vanished, all is hid

From me. My part is done. What after comes,  
I know not more than thou.

*Festus.* Raise me a spirit!

*Lucifer.* Command o'er natural essence, space, time,  
matter,

I yield thee. Can I give thee power o'er soul?

*Festus.* Awake, ye dead! out with the secret, death;  
The grave hath no pride, nor the rise-again.

Let each one bring the bane whereof he died.

Bring the man his, the maiden hers! Oh! half

Mankind are murderers of themselves or souls.

Yea, what is life but lingering suicide?

Wake, dead! Ye know the truth; yet there ye lie

All mingling, mouldering, perishing together,

Like run sand in the hour-glass of old Time.

Death is the mad world's asylum. There is peace:

Destruction's quiet and equality.

Night brings out stars as sorrow shows us truths:

Though many, yet they help not; bright, they light not.

They are too late to serve us; and sad things

Are aye too true. We never see the stars

Till we can see nought but them. So with truth.

And yet if one would look down a deep well,

Even at noon, we might see those same stars

Far fairer than the blinding blue—the truth.

Probe the profound of thine own nature, man!

And thou mayst see reflected, e'en in life,

The worlds, the heavens, the ages; by and by,

The coming come. Then welcome, world-eyed Truth!

But there are other eyes men better love

Than Truth's: for when we have her she is so cold,

And proud, we know not what to do with her.

We cannot understand her, cannot teach;

She makes us love her, but she loves not us;

And quits us as she came and looks back never.

Wherefore we fly to Fiction's warm embrace,

With her to relax and bask ourselves at ease;

And, in her loving and unhindering lap

Voluptuously lulled, we dream at most

On death and truth; she knows them, loves them not;

Therefore we hate them and deny them both.

*Lucifer.* But could I make that visible always there?

*Festus.* Call up the dead.

*Lucifer.* Let rest while rest they may.

For free from pain and from this world's wear and tear,

It may be a relief to them to rot;

And it must be that at the day of doom,

If mortals should take up immortal life,

They will curse me with a thunder which shall shake

The sun from out the socket of his sphere.

The curse of all created. Think on it.

*Festus.* Those souls thou meanest whom thou hast ruined, damned.

*Lucifer.* Nor only those; when once the virgin bloom  
Of soul is soiled; and rudely hath my hand  
Swept o'er the swelling clusters of all life;  
Little it matters whether crushed or touched  
Scarcely: each speaks the spoiler hath been there.  
The saved, the lost, shall curse me both alike:  
God too shall curse me, and I, I, myself.  
That curse is ever greatening, quick with hell;  
The coming consummation of all woe.

*Festus.* O man, be happy. Die and cease for ever.  
Why wear we not the shroud alway, that robe  
Which speaks our rank on earth, our privilege?  
To know I have a deathless soul I would lose it.

*Lucifer.* Believest thou all I tell thee?

*Festus.* All, I do.

Stringing the stars at random round her head,  
Like a pearl network, there she sits—bright Night!  
I love night more than day—she is so lovely.  
But I love night the most because she brings  
My love to me in dreams which scarcely lie;  
Oh, all but truth and lovelier oft than truth;  
Let me have dreams like these, sweet night, for ever,  
When I shall wake no more; an endless dream  
Of love and holy beauty amid the stars;  
And earth and heaven for me may share between them  
The rough realities of other bliss.

*Lucifer.* I see thy heart, and I will grant thy wish.  
I have lied to thee. I have command over spirits;  
And e'er behold them, bodiless as space.  
Whom wilt thou that I call?

*Festus.* Mine Angela!

*Lucifer.* There is an Angel ever by thine hand.  
What seest thou?

*Festus.* It is my love. It is she!  
My glory, spirit, beauty! let me touch thee.  
Nay do not shrink back; well then I am wrong:  
Thou wert not wont to shrink from me, my love.  
Angela! dost thou hear me? Speak to me.  
And thou art there—looking alive and dead.  
Thy beauty is then incorruptible.  
I thought so, oft as I have looked upon thee.  
Thou art too much even now for me as once.  
I cannot gather what I raved to say;  
Nor why I had thee hither. Stay, sweet sprite!  
Dear art thou to me now, as in that hour  
When first love's wave of feeling, spray-like, broke  
Into bright utterance, and we said we loved.

Yea, but I must come to thee. Move no more !  
 Art thou in death or heaven, or from the stars ?  
 She speaks not. 'Tis a phantom maybe, only.  
 Have I done wrong in calling for thee thus ?  
 What art thou ? Say, love ; whisper me as wont,  
 In the dear times gone by ; or durst not here,  
 Unfold the mystery of thine own bright being,  
 And mine ? Was't meddling death who hushed thy lips ?  
 Is his cold finger there still ? Let me come !  
 She is not !

*Lucifer.* And thou canst not bring her back.

*Festus.* I will not, cannot be without her. Call her.

*Lucifer.* I call on spirits and I make them come :  
 But they depart according to their own will.  
 Another time and she shall speak with thee.  
 For, of thy state no more, to know her thou  
 Into her sphere must rise.

*Festus.* What most I'd know  
 Is how soul acts, how suffers ; how the God  
 Treats, death achieved, man's mind.

*Lucifer.* She of the passed  
 Shall there fulfil thy spirit ; and, holding forth  
 The bright clue, which like lightning's friendly flash  
 Before one, night-lost in a wood, shall guide  
 The soul its path through life's returnless maze,  
 And teach the mystery of thyself. All this  
 Ere long—and she shall show thee where she dwells,  
 And how doth pass her immortality ;  
 If lengthening decay can so be called.  
 Can lines finite one way be infinite  
 Another ? And yet such is deathlessness.

*Festus.* It is hard to deem that spirits cease, that  
 thought  
 And feeling flesh-like perish in the dust.  
 Shall we know those again in a future state  
 Whom we have known and loved on earth ? Say yes !

*Lucifer.* The mind hath features as the body hath.

*Festus.* But is it mind which shall revive ?

*Lucifer.* Man were  
 Not man without the mind he had in life.  
 But, think. When dead and buried what remains,—  
 That such an obscure, contradictory thing  
 Should be perpetuated anywhere ?

*Festus.* Oh ! if God hates the flesh, why made he it  
 So beautiful that e'en its semblance maddens ?  
 Am I to credit what I think I have seen ?  
 Or am I suffering some deceit of thine ?

*Lucifer.* I am explaining, not deluding.

*Festus.* True.  
 Defining night by darkness, death by dust.  
 I run the gauntlet of a file of doubts,

Each one of which down hurls me to the ground.  
 I ask a hundred reasons what they mean,  
 And every one points gravely to the ground  
 With one hand, and to heaven with the other.  
 In vain I shut mine eyes. Truth's burning beam  
 Forces them open; and when open, blinds them.

*Lucifer.* Doubly unhappy!

*Festus.* I am too unhappy  
 To die; as some too way-worn cannot sleep.  
 Planets and suns, that set themselves on fire  
 By their own rapid self-revolvements, are  
 But like some hearts. Existence I despise.  
 The shape of man is wearisome; a bird's;  
 A worm's; a whirlwind's; I would change with aught.  
 Time! dash thine hour-glass down. Have done with this.  
 The course of nature seems a course of death;  
 The prize of life's brief race, to cease to run;  
 The sole substantial thing, death's nothingness.

*Lucifer.* Corruption springs from light; 'tis one same  
 power  
 Creates, preserves, destroys; matter whereon  
 It works, one aye self-transmutative form,  
 Common to now the living, now the dead.

*Festus.* I'll not believe a thing which I have known.  
 Hell was made hell for me, and I am mad.

*Lucifer.* True venom churns the froth out of the lips;  
 It works, and works, like any waterwheel.  
 And she then was the maiden of thy heart.  
 Well, I have promised. Ye shall meet again.  
 But stay; take this, a final warning. Aught  
 Thou hast seen, hold not too sure. Ofttimes the brain  
 Dreams waking; with vitality endows  
 Its own creations; argues; thought's best proofs  
 Refutes; what not?

*Festus.* What, all illusion?

*Lucifer.* Nay;  
 I say not so. This, that is probable.  
 Now, shall we go?

*Festus.* This moment. I am ready.  
 Farewell ye dear old walks and trees; farewell  
 Ye waters; I have loved ye well. In youth  
 And childhood it hath been my life to drift  
 Across ye lightly as a leaf; or skim  
 Your waves in yon skiff, swallowlike; or lie  
 Like a loved locket on your sunny bosom.  
 Could I, like you, by looking in myself,  
 Find mine own heaven—farewell! Immortal, come!  
 The morning peeps her blue eye on the east.

*Lucifer.* Think not so fondly as thy foolish race,  
 Imagining a heaven from things without;

The picture on the passing wave call heaven—  
 The wavelet, life—the sands beneath it, death ;  
 Daily more seen till, lo ! the bed is bare.  
 This fancy fools the world.

*Festus.*

Let us away !

*Lucifer.* Wings of the wind, be ours ! once, twice,  
 away !

#### IV.

Now sets the youth out for joy, the city of joy,  
 Whose walls illuminated with all-hued spheres  
 Beacon the immense of life. He, 'neath the care  
 Of his kindly enemy, begins his course ;  
 Each aiding other ; all beside abused.  
 Heaven, hell, life pre-existent, things not yet,  
 Things passed, immemorable, foreshadowy, show  
 Briefwise before the all-questful spirit, intent  
 To prove its dominance o'er the world, till taught  
 Earth, air, nor fire, nor all the elements fused  
 Into one subtlest essence, aught avail  
 The soul to assist or to divert, once charged  
 God's mighty but mysterious ends to achieve ;  
 Ends more substantial than all solidest things.

#### *A Mountain. Sunrise.*

#### FESTUS and LUCIFER.

*Festus.* Morn on the mountains ! Mark her lifening  
 glow,  
 Light's blessed advent prophesying ; and now  
 The awful signals, sensible, but scarce seen,  
 Of the under-welkin'd sun. Here, midst this fane,  
 With the awe of space domed, let me, sole with God,  
 In privacy of his omnipresence, pray ;  
 And while the unboundedness of earth and sky  
 Seizes in silence all the spirit, let me,  
 With nature one, for like dependent life,  
 Grateful, adore.

*Lucifer.* Oh, pray adore : I'm dumb.

*Festus.* In silence soul most nears the Infinite.  
 Hail beauteous Earth ! Gazing o'er thee, I all  
 Forget the bounds of being ; and I long  
 To fill thee, as a lover pines to blend  
 Soul, passion, yea, existence, with the fair  
 Creature he calls his own. I ask for nought  
 Before or after death but this—to lie,  
 And look, and live, and bask, and bless myself  
 Upon thy broad bright bosom.

*Lucifer.*

Earth's the Lord's.

*Festus.* True ; I should be more reverent. Thou hast all

Nature's supremest sanctities, earth. From thee  
 Sprang I, to thee I turn, heart, arm, and brain.  
 Yes, I am all thine own. Thou art the sole  
 Parent. To rock and river, plain and wood,  
 I cry, ye are my kin. While I, O earth !  
 Am but of thee an atom, and a breath,  
 Passing unseen and unrecorded, like  
 The tiny throb here in my temple's pulse.  
 Thou art for ever ; and the sacred bride  
 Of heaven—worthy the passion of our God.  
 Oh ! full of light, love, grace !—the grace of all  
 Who owe to thee their life ; thy maker's love ;  
 His face's light. All thine rejoice in thee ;  
 Thou in thyself for aye ; rolling through air,  
 As seraphs' song, out of their trumpet lips,  
 Rolls round the skies of heaven. But who is this,  
 Burning the clouds before him ; the round world  
 Apt to his golden grasp ? his fingers all  
 Streaming with light effectual to impart  
 Full fellowship of illuminate life ; from out  
 The depths extreme, who comes, of orient space ?  
 Undo those gilded bars : fling wide yon gates  
 Eastwards, of changeful pearl ; wide o'er his ways,  
 Strew palms, as 'fore heaven's conqueror, and the night's  
 Flying hosts, star-standarded, oh, make pure his paths  
 With rain of liquid crystal. He shall see  
 How earth can put on majesty, to meet  
 The king in her own mansion. Let the morn  
 Pour, penitent for the passed, o'er all his head,  
 Her wealthful waste of perfumed sweets ; his feet  
 Let kiss, with all her dews. It is he, the sun !  
 God's crest upon his azure shield the heavens.  
 Canst thou, a spirit, look upon him ?

*Lucifer.*

*Ay.*

I led him from the void, where he was wrought,  
 By this right hand, up to the glorious seat  
 His brightness overshadows ; laid on piles  
 Of gold his chambers, and upon beams of gold  
 His throne built ; flung a fire-veil round his face ;  
 Crowned him with rays reverberant from all clouds :  
 And bade him reign, and burn, like me. Like me  
 Fall, too, he must. I have done, do, nought else  
 From my first thought to this and to my last.  
 No matter ; it is beneath this mind of mine  
 To reckon aught. I bear, have borne the ill  
 Of ages, of infinities—and must.  
 I care not. I shall sway the world as now ;  
 Which worse and worse sinks with me as I sink,  
 Till finite souls vanish as a vapour ;  
 Till immortality, the proud thing, perish ;

And God alone be and eternity.  
 Then will I clap my hands and cry to him,  
 I have done ; have thy will now ; there is none but thee.  
 I am the first created being. I  
 Will be the last to perish, and to die.

*Festus.* Thou art a fit monitor, methinks, of pleasure.

*Lucifer.* To the high air sunshine and cloud are one ;  
 Pleasure and pain to me. Thou and the earth  
 Alone feel these as different ; for ye  
 Are under them ; the heavens and I above.

*Festus.* But tell me, have ye scenes like this in hell ?

*Lucifer.* Nay, not in heaven.

*Festus.* What is heaven ? not the toys  
 Of singing, love, and music ? Such a place  
 Were fit for glee-maids only.

*Lucifer.* Heaven is no place ;  
 Unless a place with God, allwhere ; no more  
 Therefore conceivably to come than now.  
 It is the being good ; the knowing God ;  
 The consciousness of happiness and power ;  
 With knowledge which no spirit e'er can lose,  
 But doth increase in every state ; and aught  
 It most delights in the full leave to do.  
 But why consume me with such questions ? Why  
 Add earth to hell, in the great chain of worlds  
 God in his wrath hath bound about me ?

*Festus.* Why !  
 'Twas therefore that I closed with thee, great Fiend !  
 That thou might'st answer all things I proposed,  
 Or bring me those who would do.

*Lucifer.* All these things  
 Thou wilt know sometime, when to see and know  
 Are one ; to see a thing and comprehend  
 The nature of it essentially ; perceive  
 The reason and the science of its being,  
 And the relations with the universe  
 Of all things actual or possible,  
 Mortal, immortal, spiritual and gross.  
 This, when the spirit is made free of heaven,  
 Is the divine result ; proportioned still  
 To the intelligence as human ; for,  
 There are degrees in heaven, as everything ;  
 By God's will. Unimaginable space,  
 As full of suns as is earth's sun of atoms,  
 Faileth to match his boundless variousness :  
 And ever must do, though a thousand worlds,  
 As diverse from each other as is thine  
 From any of thy system's, were elanced  
 Each minute into life unendingly.  
 All of yon worlds, and all who dwell in them,

Stand in diverse degrees of bliss and being.  
 Through the ten thousand times ten thousandth grade  
 Of blessedness, above this world's, and man's  
 Ability to feel or to conceive,  
 The soul may pass and yet know nought of heaven,  
 More than a dim and miniature reflection  
 Of its most bright infinity; for God  
 Makes to each spirit its peculiar heaven.  
 And yet is heaven a bright reality,  
 As this or any of yon worlds; a state  
 Where all is loveliness and power and love;  
 Where all sublimest qualities of mind  
 Not infinite, are limited alone  
 By the surrounding godhood; and where nought,  
 But what produceth glory and delight,  
 To creature and Creator, is; where all  
 Enjoy entire dominion o'er themselves,  
 Acts, feelings, thoughts, conditions, qualities,  
 Spirit, and soul, and mind; all under God,  
 For spirit is soul deified;—while earth,  
 To the immortal, vast, god-natured spirit,  
 Is but a spell which, having served to light  
 A lamp, is cast into consuming fire.

*Festus.* And hell? Is it nought but pits, and chains,  
 and flames?

*Lucifer.* An ever greatening sense of ill and woe,  
 The exhausted soul down crushing, filling never  
 Its infinite capacity of pain.

*Festus.* But human nature is not infinite,  
 And therefore cannot suffer endlessly.

*Lucifer.* God may create in time what shall endure  
 Unto eternity. With him is no  
 Distinction, nor in that which is of him.

*Festus.* Then is not soul of God, but man and earth.  
 Soul when made spirit is of earth no more,  
 Nor time, but of eternity and heaven.  
 It is but when in the body, and bent down  
 To worldly ends, that human souls become  
 Objects of time, as most are, till the hour  
 Comes when the soul of man shall be made one  
 With God's spirit; made eternal, made divine,  
 And where shall woe be then? sin? suffering?

*Lucifer.* How  
 Can souls thus favoured, then, predestined thus,  
 To glory afore all worlds, be deemed of earth,  
 Earthy?

*Festus.* Things spiritual as belonging God  
 Are to and from eternity, by him,  
 Predestined, known; nor these alone; but flesh  
 Forms not, nor doth it need the care of fate.

*Lucifer.* The object of eternal knowledge must  
Have like existence.

*Festus.* Then it cannot be  
Bound into torment, that would dreadly bring  
Torture on godlike essence.

*Lucifer.* What if thine  
Existence on this sphere were but, as told,  
In mystic tales of old spread over earth,  
The dark and narrow section of a life  
Which was with God, long ere the sun was lit :  
And shall be yet, when all the bold bright stars  
Are dark as death-dust—Immortality  
And Wisdom tending thee on either hand,  
Thy divine sisters ? What if earth-life prove,  
Of thee and thy conceptions head and end,  
Who were to blame ? Thou canst not surely expect  
Me to know all things.

*Festus.* Truly, I have heard  
Sometimes, or deemed, what deepest musings failed  
To explain, or render more than dubious, lips,  
Uncorporal lips, articulate in mine ear,  
Lessons, long ages back learned ; deemed I have felt  
 Oft-times a shadowiest conception seize  
My spirit, as though the echo of a life  
Far passed, rang through one's being, and thrilled the heart  
With sense of joys requickened, of thought rethought,  
Of difficulties fore-vanquished, and of truth  
Taught by a sacred death regenerative,  
Which, justified from sin, as though were mine  
A life half conscious of sublimer spheres,  
A mind transsessed through all faiths, refined  
Through ends divine fulfilled.

*Lucifer.* Ends thou mayst yet  
Clear from the tangled passed, if one sole clue  
Thou gloriest in.

*Festus.* Could thought but realize !—  
No, it is incredible.

*Lucifer.* Well, do thou believe  
Even as thou wilt. The science of the passed,  
The science of the future, lack them both.  
Why seek such ? Seize the present.

*Festus.* 'Tis all doubt.

*Lucifer.* Doubt's all-where, doubtless, but in heaven.

*Festus.* And thou  
Whose life shows, cataract-like, one ceaseless fall,  
Mayst match it ! But if doubt bide not in heaven,  
Neither dwells certainty upon earth. But say,  
Is it the nature or the deed of God,  
To render finite follies infinite,  
Or to eternize sin and death in fire ?

For so long as the punishment endures,  
The crime lasts. Were it not for thy presence,  
Spirit ! I would not deem hell were.

*Lucifer.* Let not  
My presence pass for more than it is worth,  
I pray, nor yet my absence. Trust me, I  
Could wish, with thee, that hell were blotted out  
Of utmost space. 'Tis man himself e'er makes  
His own God and his hell. But this is truth.

*Festus.* The truth is perilous never to the true,  
Nor knowledge to the wise ; and to the fool,  
And to the false, error and truth alike.  
Error is worse than ignorance. But say :—  
How can eternal punishment be due  
To temporal offences, to a pulse  
Of momentary madness ?

*Lucifer.* Pardon me.  
Sin is not temporary. Nothing is,  
Of spiritual nature, but hath cause  
Premortal and immortal end in all,  
As spirits. Therefore till the soul shall be  
By grace redeified, as is the soul,  
So is the sin, for ever before God.

*Festus.* Sin is not of the spirit, but of that  
Which blindeth spirit, heart and brain.

*Lucifer.* Believe so.  
The law of all the worlds is retribution.

*Festus.* But is it so of God ?

*Lucifer.* The laws of heaven  
Are not of earth ; there law is liberty.

*Festus.* Thou thundercloud of spirits, darkening  
The skies and wrecking earth ! Could I hate men  
How I should joy with thee, even as an eagle,  
Nigh famished, in the fellowship of storms ;  
But I still love them. What will come of men ?

*Lucifer.* Whatever may, perdition is their meed..  
Were heaven dispeopled for a ministry  
To warn them of their ways ; were thou and I  
To monish them ; were heaven, and earth, and hell  
To preach at once, they still would mock and jeer  
As now ; but never repent until too late ;  
Until the everlasting hour had struck.

*Festus.* Men might be better if we better deemed  
Of them. The worst way to improve the world  
Is to condemn it. Men may overget  
Delusion—not despair.

*Lucifer.* Why love mankind ?  
The affections are thy system's weaknesses ;  
The wasteful outlets of self-maintenance.

*Festus.* The wild flower's tendril, proof of feebleness,.

Proves strength ; and so we fling our feelings out,  
 The tendrils of the heart, to bear us up.  
 O earth ! how drear to think to tear oneself,  
 Even for an hour, from looks like this of thine ;  
 From features, oh ! so fair ; to quit for aye  
 The luxury of thy side. Why, why art thou  
 Thus glorious, and 'twere not to sate the soul,  
 And chide us for the senseless dream of heaven ?  
 The still strong stream sweeps seaward to its end,  
 Unrestful, unrestrainable, like one  
 Of God's great purposes ; or like may be,  
 A soul that seeks the Eternal ; like mine own.  
 Along yon deep blue vein upon thy bosom,  
 Earth ! I could float for ever. See it there—  
 Winding among its green and smiling isles,  
 Like charity amidst her children dear ;  
 Or peace, rejoicing in her olive wreaths,  
 And gladdening as she glides along the lands.

*Lucifer.* And yet all this must end ; must pass ; drop  
 down

Oblivion, like a pebble in a pit :  
 For God shall lay his hand upon the earth,  
 And crush it up like a red leaf.

*Festus.* Not be ?  
 I cannot root the thought, nor hold it firm.

*Lucifer.* This same sweet world which thou would'st  
 fondly deem

Eternal, may be ; which I soon shall see  
 Destruction suck back as the tide a shell.

*Festus.* It will not be yet. I'll woo thee, world, again ;  
 And revel in thy loveliness and love.  
 I have a heart with room for every joy :  
 And since we must part sometime, while I may,  
 I'll quaff the nectar in thy flowers, and press  
 The richest clusters of thy luscious fruit  
 Into the cup of my desires. But who  
 Would care to live unless he were loved, and loved  
 Unless he had all things young and beautiful,  
 Bound up like pictures in his book of life ?  
 It is vanity, of all things most, makes bear  
 With life. Some live like unenlightened stars  
 Of the first darkness ; lifeless, timeless, useless ;  
 With nothing but a cold night air about them ;  
 Not suns ; not planets ; blankness, limbed and framed ;  
 Orbs of a desert gloom : with not one soul  
 To light its watch-fire in their waste of being ;  
 Or seem so, miserably ; but how or why  
 They live I know not. This to me is life ;  
 That if life be a burden, I will join  
 To make it but the burden of a song :

I hate the world's coarse thought. And this is life ;  
 To watch young beauty's budlike feelings burst  
 And load the soul with love ; as that pale flower  
 Which opes at eve, spreads sudden on the dark  
 Its yellow bloom, and sinks the air down with sweets.  
 Let heaven take all that's good—hell all that's foul ;  
 Leave us the lovely, and we will ask no more.

*Lucifer.* To me it seems time all should end. The sky  
 Grows grey. It is not so bright nor blue as once.  
 Well I remember, as it were yesterday,  
 When earth and heaven went happy, hand in hand,  
 With all the morning dew of youth about them ;  
 With the bright unworldly hearts of youth and truth,  
 And the maiden bosoms of the beautiful :—  
 Ere earth sinned, or the pure indignant heavens  
 Retreated high, nigh God ; ere grossening age  
 Had thicked the eyes of stars ; or land was all  
 A creeping mass alive with shapeless things :  
 Nay, when there were but three things in the world—  
 Monsters, mountains, and water ; and the sea,  
 Rejoicing like a ring of saints round God,  
 Or heaven on heaven about some new-born sun,  
 Cloud swathed, in holy hilarity laughed out,  
 And cried, Nor I, like God, I never rest.

*Festus.* God hath his rest, earth hers. Let me have  
 mine.

Yet must I look on thee, fair scene, again,  
 Ere I depart. The glory of the world  
 Is on all hands. In one encircling ken,  
 I gaze on river, sea, isle, continent,  
 Mountain, and wood, and wild, and fire-lipped hill,  
 And lake, and golden plain, and sun, and heaven,  
 Where the stars brightly die, whose death is day.  
 City and port and palace, ships and tents,  
 Lie massed and mapped before me. All is here.  
 The elements of the world are at my feet,  
 Above me and about me. Now would I  
 Be and do somewhat beside that I am.  
 Canst thou not give me some æthereal slave,  
 Of the pure essence of an element ;  
 Such as my bondless brain hath oftentimes drawn  
 In the divine insanity of dreams ;  
 To stand before me, and obey me, spirit ?

*Lucifer.* Call out, and see if aught arise to thee.

*Festus.* Green dewy earth, who standest at my feet.  
 Singing, and pouring sunshine on thy head,  
 As naiad native water, speak to me !  
 I am thy son. Canst thou not now, as once,  
 Bring forth some being dearer, liker to thee

Than is my race—titan or tiny fay,  
Stream-nymph or wood-nymph ?

*Lucifer.* She hath ceased to speak,  
Like God, except in thunder ; or to look,  
Unless in lightning. Miracles, with earth,  
Are out of fashion, as with heaven ; and more's  
The pity. Call elsewhere. Old earth is hard  
Of hearing, maybe.

*Festus.* I beseech thee, sea !  
Tossing thy wavy locks in sparkling play,  
Like a child awakening with the warmthful light  
To laughter ; canst not thou dis gulph for me,  
From thy deep bosom, deep as heaven is high,  
Of all thy sea-gods one, or sea-maids ?

*Lucifer.* None ?

*Festus.* Canst not from out that palpable vapour rolled  
Shorewards, in misty gusts, thy wave's salt breath,  
Mould me some voluntary shadow endowed  
With powers of suit or aid ?

*Lucifer.* Shadow, appear !

*Festus.* I half despair. Fire ! that art slumbering  
there,  
Like some stern warrior in his rocky fort,  
After the vast invasion of the world,  
Hast not some flaming imp, or messenger  
Of empyrean element, to whom  
In virtue of his nature, are both known  
The secrets of the burning, central, void below,  
And yon bright heaven, out of whose æry fire  
Are wrought the forms of angels, and the thrones ?  
Hast none at hand to do my bidding ? Come !  
Breathe out a spirit for me ; not fierce, not gross,  
Nor of strength destructive, but of finest force ;  
Such as flames forth in flowerets, sets, in spring,  
The hills ablaze with gorse-light, and with pyres,  
Odorous, of floral gold, crowns ; one I ask  
To be with me always as a friend, an aid ;  
Not, spirit, like thee, who despotizest o'er  
The heart thou seekst to serve. I must be free.

*Lucifer.* All finite souls must serve : their widest sway  
Is but the rule of service. This fair earth  
Whose parti-coloured robe thou boast'st of so ;  
Seest not, in truth, all this but scummy dross  
Of the original element whence were framed  
She, and her fiery peers ? Conditioned still  
To the end, by birth-laws, thou and they alike  
Must keep at cost of being ?—What freedom thou  
Canst from that teat draw, draw.

*Festus.* Air ! and thou wind !  
Which art the unseen similitude of God

The Spirit, his most meet and mightiest sign :  
The earth with all her steadfastness and strength,  
Sustaining all, and bound about with chains  
Of mountains, as is life with mercies ; ranging round  
With all her sister orbs the whole of heaven,  
Is not so like the unlikenable One  
As thou. Ocean is less divine than thee ;  
For although all but limitless, it is yet  
Visible, many a land not visiting.  
But thou art, lovelike, everywhere ; o'er earth,  
O'er main-sea triumphing ; and aye with clouds,  
That like the ghosts of ocean's billows roll,  
Decking or darkening heaven. The sun's light  
Floweth and ebbeth daily like the tides ;  
The moon's doth grow or lessen, night by night ;  
The stirless stars shine forth by fits and hide ;  
And our companion planets come and go,  
In maze concentric, intercyclng, vast ;  
And all are known, their laws and liberties.  
But no man can foreset thy coming, none  
Reason against thy going ; thou art free,  
The type impalpable of spirit, thou,  
God's vital breath, great purifier of earth.  
Thunder is but a momentary thing,  
Like a world's death-rattle, and is like death ;  
And lightning, like the blaze of sin, can blind  
Only and slay. But what are these to thee,  
In thine all-present variousness ? So light  
As not to awaken, now, the snowiest down  
Upon the dove's breast, winning her bright way  
Calm and sublime as grace to suffering soul,  
Towards her far native grove ; now, stern and strong  
As ordnance, overturning tree and tower ;  
Cooling the white brows of the peaks of fire ;  
Turning the sea's broad furrows like a plough ;  
Fanning the fruitening plains ; breathing the sweets  
Of meadows ; wandering over blinding snows ;  
And sands like sea-beds ; and the streets of cities,  
Where men as garnered grain lie heaped together ;  
Freshening the cheeks, and mingling oft the locks  
Of youth and beauty 'neath star-speaking eve ;  
Swelling the pride of canvas, or, in wrath,  
Scattering the fleets of nations like dead leaves ;  
In all, the same o'ermastering sightless force ;  
Bowing the highest things of earth to earth,  
And lifting up the dust to the stars ; fatelike,  
Confounding finite reason, and like God's  
Spirit, conferring life upon the world ;  
Midst all corruption incorruptible :  
Monarch of all the elements ! hast no soft

Æolian sylph, with strong but sightless wing,  
To spare a suppliant for an hour?

*Lucifer.*

Peace, peace!

All nature knows that I am with thee here;  
And that thou need'st no minor minister.  
To thee I personate the world—its powers,  
Beliefs, and doubts, and practices.

*Festus.*

Are all

Mine invocations fruitless, then?

*Lucifer.*

They are.

Let us enjoy the world.

*Festus.*

'Twere well.

*Lucifer.*

'Tis time.

As when, in boreal climes, the southerning sun,  
One hour on heaven's ærial rood suspense,  
The ecliptic cleared, thereafter, east and west,  
More liberal day flings round; pleased earth responds;  
And the ice-fettered rivulet, joyed, breaks up,  
Clattering, in fluvial freedom, thenceforth flowing  
Deeplier and more impulsive; so thy heart  
For a season chilled, contracted, in unseen  
Currents constrained, shall now its course resume,  
Leaping with life redundant.

*Festus.*

Wer't God's will

That thou shouldst visit me, he shall not send  
Temptation to my heart in vain. Sweet world!  
We all still cling to thee. Though thou thyself  
Passest away, yet men will hanker about thee,  
Like mad ones by their moping haunts. Men pass  
Cleaving to things themselves which pass away,  
Like leaves on waves. Thus all things pass for ever,  
Save mind and the mind's meed.

*Lucifer.*

Let us too pass!

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## V.

Soul solemnized by dear one's death, belief  
 In heavenly life confirmed of reason finds.  
 Here round her bier they meet who several rule,  
 After, the heart to each in turn their fate.  
 World-knowledge, fruit both sweet and bitter, shows  
 Its green and ruddy sides, mean, generous thought.  
 Trial of ill and folly gives best right  
 To warn, denounce : to the inventor now,  
 And now, his aid, of vanities. But little  
 Good comes of sermons, prophesies or warnings,  
 Though every sign be fore-detailed of doom,  
 And though from the steps of an old grey market-cross,  
 The Devil is holding forth to the faithless. There,  
 Even, and not less predictions gravest oft  
 Most slighted, may the spirit of truth provide  
 Conviction just, fit utterance. So to God  
 A social prayer is offered up for man  
 Of all strains, countries, politics, creeds.

*A Country Town—Market-place. Noon.*

LUCIFER and FESTUS.

*Lucifer.* These be the toils and cares of mighty men ;  
 Earth's vermin are as fit to fill her thrones  
 As these high heaven's bright seats.

*Festus.*

Men's callings all

Are mean and vain ; their wishes more so : oft  
 The man is bettered by his part or place.  
 How slight a chance may raise or sink a soul !

*Lucifer.* What men call accident is God's own part.  
 He lets ye work your will—it is his own :  
 But that ye mean not, know not, do not, he doth.

*Festus.* What is life worth without a heart to feel  
 The great and lovely harmonies which time  
 And nature change responsive, all writ out  
 By preconcertive hand which swells the strain  
 To divine fulness ; feel the poetry,  
 The soothing rhythm of life's fore-ordered lay ;  
 The sacredness of things, for all things are  
 Sacred so far,—the worst of them, as seen  
 By the eye of God, they in the aspect bide  
 Of holiness ; nor shall outlaw sin be slain,  
 Though rebel banned, within the sceptre's length ;  
 But privileged even for service. Oh ! to stand  
 Soul-raptured, on some lofty mountain thought,  
 And feel the spirit expand into a view  
 Millennial, life-exalting, of a day  
 When earth shall have all leisure for high ends  
 Of social culture ; ends a liberal law  
 And common peace of nations, blent with charge

Divine, shall win for man, were joy indeed :  
 Nor greatly less, to know what might be now,  
 Worked will for good with power, for one brief hour.  
 But look at these, these individual souls :  
 How sadly men show out of joint with man !  
 There are millions never think a noble thought :  
 But with brute hate of brightness bay a mind  
 Which drives the darkness out of them, like hounds.  
 Throw but a false glare round them, and in shoals  
 They rush upon perdition : that's the race.  
 What charm is in this world-scene to such minds  
 Blinded by dust ? What can they do in heaven,  
 A state of spiritual means and ends ?  
 Thus must I doubt—perpetually doubt.

*Lucifer.* Who never doubted never half believed.  
 Where doubt there truth is—'tis her shadow. I  
 Declare unto thee that the passed is not.  
 I have looked over all life, yet never seen  
 The age that had been. Why then fear or dream  
 About the future ? Nothing but what is, is ;  
 Else God were not the Maker that he seems,  
 As constant in creating as in being.  
 Embrace the present. Let the future pass.  
 Plague not thyself about a future. That  
 Only which comes direct from God, his spirit,  
 Is deathless. Nature gravitates without  
 Effort ; and so all mortal natures fall  
 Deathwards. All aspiration is a toil ;  
 But inspiration cometh from above,  
 And is no labour. The earth's inborn strength  
 Could never lift her up to yon stars, whence  
 She fell ; nor human soul, by native worth,  
 Claim heaven as birthright, more than man may call  
 Cloudland his home. The soul's inheritance,  
 Its birth-place, and its death-place, is of earth ;  
 Until God maketh earth and soul anew ;  
 The one like heaven, the other like himself.  
 So shall the new creation come at once ;  
 Sin, the dead branch upon the tree of life,  
 Shall be cut off for ever ; and all souls  
 Concluded in God's boundless amnesty.

*Festus.* Thou windest and unwindest faith at will,  
 What am I to believe ?

*Lucifer.* Thou mayest believe  
 But that thou art forced to.

*Festus.* Then I feel, perforce,  
 That instinct of immortal life in me,  
 Which prompts me to provide for it.

*Lucifer.* Perhaps.

*Festus.* Man hath a knowledge of a time to come—

His most important knowledge: the weight lies  
 Nearest the short end: and the world depends  
 Upon what is to be. I would deny  
 The present, if the future. Oh! there is  
 A life to come, or all's a dream.

*Lucifer.*

And all

May be a dream. Thou seest in thine, men, deeds,  
 Clear, moving, full of speech and order; then  
 Why may not all this world be but a dream  
 Of God's? Fear not! Some morning God may waken.

*Festus.* I would it were. This life's a mystery.

The value of a thought cannot be told;  
 But it is clearly worth a thousand lives  
 Like many men's. And yet men love to live  
 As if mere life were worth their living for.  
 What but perdition will it be to most?  
 Life's more than breath and the quick round of blood;  
 It is a great spirit and a busy heart.  
 The coward and the small in soul scarce do live.  
 One generous feeling—one great thought—one deed  
 Of good, ere night, would make life longer seem  
 Than if each year might number a thousand days,  
 Spent as is this by nations of mankind.  
 We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;  
 In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
 We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives  
 Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best.  
 Life's but a means unto an end—that end  
 Beginning, mean and end to all things—God.  
 The dead have all the glory of the world.  
 Why will we live and not be glorious?  
 We never can be deathless till we die.  
 It is the dead win battles. And the breath  
 Of those who through the world drive like a wedge,  
 Tearing earth's empires up, nears Death so close  
 It dims his wellworn scythe. But no! the brave  
 Die never. Being deathless, they but change  
 Their country's arms for more—their country's heart.  
 Give then the dead their due: it is they who saved us.  
 The rapid and the deep—the fall, the gulph,  
 Have likenesses in feeling and in life.  
 And life, so varied, hath more loveliness  
 In one day than a creeping century  
 Of sameness. But youth loves and lives on change,  
 Till the soul sighs for sameness; which at last  
 Becomes variety, and takes its place.  
 Yet some will last to die out, thought by thought,  
 And power by power, and limb of mind by limb,  
 Like lamps upon a gay device of glass,  
 Till all of soul that's left be dry and dark;

Till even the burden of some ninety years  
 Hath crashed into them like a rock ; shattered  
 Their system as if ninety suns had rushed  
 To ruin earth—or heaven had rained its stars ;  
 Till they become, like scrolls, unreadable,  
 Through dust and mould. Can they be cleaned and read ?  
 Do human spirits wax and wane like moons ?

*Lucifer.* The eye dims and the heart gets old and slow ;  
 The lithe limbs stiffen, and the sun-hued locks  
 Thin themselves off, or whitely wither ; still,  
 Ages not spirit, even in one point,  
 Immeasurably small ; from orb to orb,  
 Rising in radiance ever like the sun  
 Shining upon the thousand lands of earth.  
 Look at the medley, motley throng we meet !  
 Some smiling, frowning some ; their cares and joys  
 Alike not worth a thought ; some sauntering slowly,  
 As if destruction never could overtake them ;  
 Some hurrying on, as fearing judgment swift  
 Should trip the heels of death, and seize them living.

*Festus.* Grief hallows hearts even while it ages heads ;  
 And much hot grief, in youth, forces up life  
 With power which too soon ripens and which drops.

[*A funeral passes.*

Ah ! what is this ? A mystery, sure resolved.  
 I felt as fascinated towards this spot.  
 Meseemed I saw a beckoning, as of bright  
 Invisible hands I could not choose but follow.  
 'Twas for this, doubtless.

*Lucifer.* Strange coincidence !  
 Behold those three fair maiden mourners. Well,  
 It is something, in default of other means,  
 To leave fair friends behind one. Speak to them.

*Festus.* That were I nowise loth to do. But stay ;  
 My heart is not an anvil ; and the blow  
 Which grief hath struck me, needs not to be paired ;  
 Or they might breed for ever.

*Lucifer.* Speak to them.

*Festus.* Why, yes, I'll speak to them ; I know them  
 all,

As they know her they follow. Yet, methinks,  
 All knowing, to ask curiously seems ill.

*Lucifer.* To learn what others know seems only well.

*Festus.* Whose funeral is this ye follow, friends ?

*Lucifer.* Would ye have grief, let me come. I am  
 woe.

*Mourner.* We want no grief, Festus ! she died of grief.

*Festus.* Said'st thou she died ? Oh, then, I knew her.

*Mourner.* True.

*Festus.* Set down the body ; I would look yet on her.

Not lovelier now than ever, only not.

And garlanded, as for bridals.

*Mourner.*

True. What then ?

Say not thou knewst not, thou, this crownèd maid,  
Willed as death's bride, not thine, to be thus interred.

*Festus.* Her hopes knew I too well. Oh, no ! I nought  
Deny. I am doomed too many to offend,  
To prove the end of. Not the less, let be.  
When died she ?

*Mourner.*

But the o'er-last night when the sun  
His purple sea-couch pressed, and high in air  
Heaven glorified itself with every hue  
The world holds loveliest. 'Twas to those who watched  
That deathbed as if nature yearned to express  
By all tints gorgeousest her inmost joy  
To know this soul's reunion with its God.

*Festus.* I mind the hour, the moment. 'Twas the  
breath

As of a thousand lilies, witness pure  
Of her spirit's sanctity, lingering by this bier,  
Still, compassed me unconscious of the event,  
And marvelling of the miracle. Let me look !

*Mourner.* In sooth, a piteous sight.

*Festus.*

A heavenly sight !

Now, Son of God ! what dost thou now in heaven,  
While one so beautiful lies earthening here ?  
I will give up the future for the passed ;  
The wingèd spirit and the starry home,  
If thou wilt let her live and make me love.

*Clara.* I feel as though her spirit hovered near ;  
Holy and pure it wafts me with its wings.

*Elissa.* Their shadows strike across me. Let us move.  
Friends wait us sorrowing where, hard by, her sires  
Sleep in the marbled minster.

*Festus.*

Heed them not ;

Our duty, this day, waits on destiny. Stay.

*Lucifer.* Canst thou not spare to these her sister  
friends,

Whose eyes with grief's salt baptism run o'er ;  
And who, like mourning starlets, weep the end  
Of their once brightest, one consoling word ?

*Festus.* Their solace mine ; her, sometime, to rejoin.  
Were ye not with her when she died ?

*Helen.*

We were.

She left among us a bequest which I  
Dare not accept nor now name ; but it drew  
From our torn hearts a promise as the steel  
Magnetic from a wound the painful speck.

*Festus.* For me to know might haply both console.

*Clara.* But never wilt thou know it from my lips.

*Helen.* She bade all cherish thee for her dear sake ;  
And gave thee her forgiveness.

*Festus.* Shade divine !  
Spirit immortal and immaculate, hear !  
Speak !

*Elissa.* What ! Art mad ? Wouldst have a spirit  
here ;  
And in the day's broad eye ?

*Lucifer.* Why not ?

*Elissa.* Grant, heaven !  
I only swoon.

*Festus.* Swoon not, but brace thy heart  
To its true tension. It may have yet to bear  
Unheard-of woes. Speak, spirit, that our poor ears  
May grow rich treasures of thy golden words.

*Elissa.* Nay, wish not back from her paternal heavens  
The pure ghost, self-congratulative ere now,  
Of its translated life.

*Festus.* She comes no more.

*Clara.* Nor would she, save by night, when her fair  
feet,  
Threading the shiny mazes of the stars,  
May bring us helpful hope, by grace divine ;  
Or us perchance premonish.

*Lucifer.* Voice is none.

*Festus.* No, all is still ; and still right well I know,  
If aught behoves me learn by token, dream,  
Vision, or sign, or visitation, I  
Shall learn it ; and like truly do ye know,  
Ye heedful, faithful, faultless few, her friends,  
Where'er her spirit dwells, she dwells in full  
Regality of nature ; crowned with power,  
With purity clothed and girt with grace. Her air  
Was an immortal's always. I have seen  
Stars look upon't kinwise, with sympathy.

*Mourner.* She was a love-gift heaven once gave to  
earth,  
And took again, because unworthy of her.

*Festus.* And will ye gaze again upon her face ?  
Draw nigh. But kneel the majesty of death.

*Helen.* Speak, thou beloved sister of my heart !  
Death shall be loyal to thee ; nought shall change  
Thy form's marmoreal loveliness. All truth  
Thou holdest now, all knowledge. Speak to us !

*Clara.* No : she is silent in the hand of death ;  
Soothed by his touch perchance, like a young bird,  
Dreadless ; incredulous of cruel fate.

*Festus.* Soul of my spirit !

*Clara.* Oh, ne'er could she have dreamed  
This wrong from thee !

*Festus.* This wrong ! Hear, Clara, thou  
Whose name stands first in memory, even ere hers,  
Nor know I when I loved not thee.

*Clara.* Be dumb.  
Never until we have mourned for mourning ceased,  
Shall hope herself have hope to exculpate one,  
Would dim thy name, sweet spirit, with even a plaint.  
Thou didst but dip thy wing in life's dark stream,  
And then away. We, wondering, watched thee whilst.

*Elissa.* How hath the white rose conquered on this  
cheek !

This fair and final field of death and life.  
Life is no match for death, since thou art fled ;  
The balance of existence is no more.  
Let us begone, where thou art gone, to heaven.

*Mourner.* And yet we weep thee, weep thee, all of us.

*Festus.* How could I be so cruel ? Who but I ?  
O faithful as the mooncrowned night to heaven,  
In pure recurrent beauty, is then this  
Saddest of trysts our last ; or do we yet  
Meet in the far-off future ?

*Lucifer.* Much depends.

*Elissa.* And is there no remorse ?

*Clara.* No blame ?

*Helen.* No wrong ?

*Festus.* Why are ye troubled thus, and your clear souls  
Made for a moment turbid ? Can ye grieve  
As I grieve ; ye, as I be wretched ? No !  
But though it claim no pre-established course,  
Yet give a torrent place ; 'twere wise ; 'twere wise.

*Mourner.* The moment after thou desertedst her,  
A cloud came over the prospect of her life ;  
And I foresaw how evening would set in,  
Early, and dark and deadly. She was true.

*Festus.* Did I not love thee, too ? pure perfect thing ;  
This is a soul I see and not a body.  
Go, beauty, rest for aye ; go, starry eyes,  
And lips like rosebuds peeping out of snow ;  
Go, breast love-filled as a boat's sail with wind,  
Leaping from wave to wave as leaps a child  
Thoughtless, o'er grassy graves ; go, locks which have  
The golden embrownment of a lion's eye.  
Yet one more look ; farewell, thou well and fair !  
All who but loved thee shall be deathless ; nought  
Named, if with thee, can perish. Thou and death  
Have made each other purer, lovelier seem,  
Like snow and moonlight. Never more for thee  
Let eyes be swollen, like streams with latter rains.  
To die were rapture, having lived with thee.  
Thy soul hath passed out of a bodily heaven

Into a spiritual. Rest ! pure after love ;  
In love pure ; pure before. The dead are holy.  
I would I were among them.

*Elissa.* Let us hence.

*Festus.* Nay, not so soon shalt thou unbless mine eyes.  
I turn, and turn, to tread the round of fate,  
As worshippers of old their templed tombs ;  
And lo ! thy tomb, thy temple is my heart.

*Clara.* She is no more in man's hand ; but in God's.

*Festus.* So young, so lovely, so adored. Thy years  
The moon's sweet cycle scarce had run ; and now,  
Oh ! recommence in heaven thy dateless course.  
Our souls were so, so delicately attuned,  
A scarce discernible discord, a lapsed word,  
An inconsiderate eyeglance, thrilled through both,  
With well-nigh fatal jar. But here, this hour,  
What is there I'd not give, again to know  
That bosom's lightest swell, which once, 'gainst mine,  
For pardon craved, or granted, a mere thought,  
Beat like the billows of the sea of life ?  
And now corruption, come ; sit, sate thyself.  
This is the choicest revel thou hast been at.  
Thou art my happier, only rival, thou  
Who takest love from the living ; life from beauty ;  
Beauty from death ; whole robber of the world.

*Helen.* Oh, heaven is happier, now that thou art there,  
Sweetest of human spirits ; and for us  
Enough, the blessing to have known thee here.

*Festus.* It is so. All life's blessings, hope and peace ;  
And innocence of youth's prime, seem sweeping past,  
As with the footfall of a cataract,  
Deathwards precipitately ; and, fled with these,  
Thou, happy spirit, serene, seraphic ! Yes !  
Thou, too, art gone. Upon thy brow, no more  
Fair seer of lucent eye shall see ray forth  
The inborn crownlet : crown of light, or fire,  
All wear, all work, unweeting, for themselves :  
Dewbright was thine. Closed are thine eyes for aye.  
Those deep dark jets of light ; that pearly hand,  
Gifted with whitest witchery to convoke  
Pure beings that oft beset our sunshot path,  
Gleams with the seal of power no more. No more  
The star-throned rulers of the spheral heavens  
Obey thy bidding here. On other shores  
The kings of thought salute thee. Thou hast passed  
The river of judgment ; and the saintly land  
Of the elect immortals guests thee now.  
Wait thou awhile to welcome me : not long ;  
For thought's substantive shadows, things create

Of our own mind vivific, me forewarn,  
 Like eastern slaves, lip-fingered, menacing mutes;  
 Death is at hand. O injudicious judge!  
 Justice unjust; what though the world must die,  
 Was this her time? What more can time unrol?  
 Can life replevy upon the house of death?  
 Can truth unteach the promise of the passed?  
 Can earth remass the wealth of worship thou  
 Outpouredst at my feet, more than numb age,  
 That feast of lips, that banquet of the breast,  
 Which Paradisal youth yields yet to all?  
 No! thou art gone. Oh, never till the hour  
 When the great Gatherer, with his spirit hand,  
 Hath culled the ripe worlds from the tree of life,  
 Shall, sunlike, set in its illumined grave  
 Another head, sacred as thine. Farewell,  
 Thou fair perfection of the universe;  
 I turn to thee, the prayer-point of my soul;  
 And swear, by all the hopes I have of death,  
 I had more prized all wretchedness with thee,  
 Than joy with others. Fate, fulfil thy scheme.  
 Demand thy fee. There's nought worth reckoning left.  
 The fair configurations of my life  
 Are passed away. Lingers alone in air  
 One pale malignant star; that star, mine own.

*Lucifer.* Oh, we'll think better sometime of our stars;  
 Myself, by fits, feel faintly saturnine;  
 Given to low spirits, and so forth. But have care,  
 Or thou wilt drain these lovely eyes of tears  
 That may be wanted yet.

*Festus.* This in thine ear.  
 Blood is more easily shed than tears, by men;  
 And I would spare some heart-drops from their fount,  
 When every drop were worth a year of life,  
 Rather than now these glittering traitors fell.  
 But not less be thou silent. Let these weep.  
 It is well that I have mingled tears with theirs.  
 Fair Eden's rivers had one only head,  
 And flowed into one outfall: our great dole,  
 Like vent. And now though I wander round the world,  
 Each step but brings me nearer to the grave;  
 Her grave.

*Elissa.* Perchance, there, we may meet again?

*Lucifer.* Lovely lamenters! We again will meet.

*Festus.* Peace, soulless spirit.

*Lucifer.* Peace is all I ask.

*Festus.* Let us rejoice for her; for ourselves mourn;  
 Wholly and separately. Art thou, say, blithe?  
 Remember whom we grieve for now; art sad?  
 Reflect that she is bliss. Mere happiness

Is of ourselves ; but blessedness of God.  
And so, rejoice, fair mourners, and farewell.

*Lucifer.* O ignorance sublime ! O innocence !  
What would I risk to know ye, and believe !

*Festus.* Behold them slowly westering on their way,  
Like those bright lights that head heaven's starry bier.

*Lucifer.* Each hath a special grace.

*Festus.* But as I live—

*Lucifer.* Come, that is cheering ; not a minute since  
At the last gasp I deemed thee.

*Festus.* I marked not  
Their several charms, opponent or in trine.

*Lucifer.* Thou shalt love all at will.

*Festus.* I hear thee not.  
Suffer my silence. One thing seems. Henceforth  
I have a love on earth and one in heaven.

*Lucifer.* That I misdoubt not. This is somewhat dull.  
There is a mean with him as all : and now,  
Ere my free promises too soon condense  
Into more gross utilities, it were well  
I from this sacred and supernal love  
His heart should alienate ; and, time by time,  
With some calm passion, or—I have them yet  
Before me in mine eye, with rival fair  
Not frivolous, oh no, spiritual, scarce less  
Serious this next than her late canonized ;  
More provident of the future, may be, vowed  
To active piety more,—assort him, till  
Aweary of all these animate ice-maidens  
Dolorous, he seek life's luxuries, in despair,  
And youth's gay converse ; shallow joys, but still  
Quite deep enough to drown. I'll think on't.

*Festus.* Hope !  
Where dwells she ?

*Lucifer.* Hope ? In dreamland. Sometime soon  
Or never, at the furthest, we'll hie thither.  
I have seen her house by moonlight, travelling once  
Nigh Ouranus sixth satellite. Much I fear  
It is mostly moonshine there, by tremulous wastes  
Of darkness intervalled. Sweet spot, Hope's home !  
Grounds ? What it stands on, true ; but everywhere  
Vast outlooks. All well fenced about with towers  
Planned, to reach heaven, but failing that, doubt not  
They touch the feet of clouds. Her closeless gates  
No janitor haunts, suspicious, souring air  
With his writhed countenance ; fact, to me, who own  
A key that opens walls, let alone doors,  
Less than to some momentous. Strange to note,  
The house will show all sizes ; now a dwarf  
Might fork it ; now 'twould guest a giant.

*Festus.* *Good.*  
Perhaps we both may lodge there some fine day.  
*Lucifer.* But in the meanwhile more substantial ends  
Will better suit us. Life hath claims on thee.

*Festus.* Living is but a habit; and I mean  
To break myself of it soon.

*Lucifer.* Too soon thou canst not,  
When that is preappointed stands achieved.  
Meantime I half think with thee; and much grieve  
Men heed not of the day, how nigh none knows,  
Which brings the consummation of the world.  
But in mine ear the old machine already  
Begins to grate. They would not credit warning,  
Or I would up and cry, repent! I will.  
Here's a fair gathering and I feel moved.  
Mortals, repent! the world is nigh to its end;  
On its last legs, and desperately sick.  
See ye not how it reels round all day long?

*Boys.* Oh! here's a ranter. Come, here's fun. Amen.  
I know the church service by heart.

*Bystander.* Be off!  
You'll serve the church by keeping out of it.

*Lucifer.* I am a preacher come to tell ye truth.  
I tell ye too there is no time to be lost;  
So fold your souls up neatly, while ye may;  
Direct to God in heaven; or some one else  
May seize them, seal them, send them—you know where.  
The world must end. I weep to think of it.  
But you, you laugh! I knew ye would. I know  
Men never will be wise till they are fools  
For ever. Laugh away! The time will come,  
When tears of fire are trickling from your eyes,  
You will blame yourselves for having laughed at me.  
I warn ye, men: prepare; repent; be saved.  
I warn ye, not because I love, but know ye.  
God will dissolve the world, as she of old  
Her pearl, within his cup, and swallow ye  
In wrath: although to taste ye would be poison,  
And death and suicide to aught but God.  
Again I warn ye. Save himself who can!  
Do ye not oft begin to seek salvation?  
You? you? and fail, as oft, to find? Sink? Cease?  
And shall I tell ye, brethren, why ye fail  
Once and for ever? why, there is no passed;  
And the future is the fiction of a fiction;  
The present moment is eternity.  
It is that ye have sucked corruption from the world  
Like milk from your own mothers; it is in  
Your soul-blood and your soul-bones. Earth does not  
Wean one out of a thousand sons to heaven.

Beginnings are alike : it is ends which differ.  
 One drop falls, lasts, and dries up, but a drop ;  
 Another begins a river : and one thought  
 Settles a life, an immortality :  
 And that one thought ye will not take to good.  
 Now will I tell ye just one other truth :  
 Ye hate the truth as snails salt, it dissolves ye,  
 Body and soul ; but I don't mind. So, now :  
 Up to this moment ye are all, each, what ?  
 Suppose I leave you to infer. 'Twill be  
 The same, we know, the next day—and the next :  
 Till some fine morning, ye will wake in fire.  
 Observe, I mince not, I, the truth for ye.  
 Belike you think your lives will dribble out,  
 As brooks in summer dry up. Let us see !  
 Try : dike them up : they stagnate ; thicken ; scum.  
 That would make life worse than death. Well, let go !  
 Where are ye then ? for life, like water, will  
 Find its last level ; what level ? The grave.  
 It is but a fall of five feet after all ;  
 That cannot hurt ye ; it is but just enough  
 To work the wheel of life ; so work away !  
 Ye may think that I do not know the terms  
 And treasures whereupon ye live so high.  
 But I know more than most men, modestly  
 Speaking. I know I am lost, you too I fear.  
 Could God, save by destroying me, me save,  
 I oftentimes ask myself, self-tormenting. So,  
 With none advantage over you, I have thought  
 Rather ye might, perhaps, the freelier bear  
 One in your own state to advise for ye.  
 Now don't you envy me, good folks, I pray ;  
 Envy's a coal comes hissing hot from hell.  
 'Twill be such coals will burn ye, by the way.  
 Your other preachers first think they are safe.  
 Then run they to and fro to serve ye, slave,  
 Slay themselves well nigh ; sweating like a bone  
 Unburied, alway. I, too, for your sakes.  
 But I, alas ! boast no such perfectness.  
 Nay, I say broadly I am the worst among ye ;  
 And God knows I have no need to wrong myself,  
 Nor you. I boast not of it, but as truth ;  
 It is little to be proud of, credit me.  
 What is salvation ? What is safety ? Think !  
 Who wants to know ? Does any ?

*The Crowd.*

All of us.

*Lucifer.* Then I will not tell ye. You shall wait  
until

Some angel come and stir your stagnant souls :  
Then plunge into yourselves and rise redeemed.

Oh ! but say you, we are redeemed, long since,  
 Our faults condoned, debts cancelled, all. God ran  
 One winter eve, the yuletide holidays,—  
 His pen right down the black accompt, choke full  
 Of columned figures, row on row, and smiled ;  
 Passed your poor pot-hooks palliative of play ;  
 Your sham excuses of mistaken feasts ;  
 Sick headaches, paltry truantries, what not ?  
 And ticked off all, bills, extras, dues, as paid.  
 So ye are new men, you ; most, at least. Look to it !  
 But don't take rights for granted ; nor all said  
 Of gospel, gospel : nor because one dies,—  
 How miserably defunct you would fain not know,—  
 But a would-be friend, and leaves you all he had,  
 His charity, think you e'er forsooth must live  
 In lack-nought ease, and unconditioned joy.  
 There's not much logic, I can tell ye, there.

*A Voice.* You look quite fresh from college. Who's  
 your coach ?

Do spend your long vacation here.

*Lucifer.*

Our term's

Not yet quite over. Make the most of chance.  
 Think, lucky for your sakes I'm here. But here  
 Nought tempts my stay. You are unjust. Could I see  
 One hoised for my offence, nor cry, Let go !  
 I did it : punish me ? Indeed not. Come,  
 Play fair, now : don't be always crying ' Kings !'  
 And think to sneak, unnoted, to the goal.  
 Some odd day, mark me, you'll be caught ; and then—  
 Why then, so much precisely as you have shirked  
 Your proper share, you'll earn worse buffetings.  
 Quit your own forfeits. Sin like demi-gods,  
 If sin ye will ; but pay your scot, like men.  
 Don't run up a huge score, and leave a friend,  
 A mere acquaintance, rather, of whose name  
 You have taken advantage, to pay for you. Tush !  
 You know heaven's terms, and right and wrong, both know  
 As well as up and down, or north and south.  
 Heed, then, which way you wend. If that way, sure  
 You will one day knock the pole. Don't say, you thought  
 It only led to Babylon ; led to Rome ;  
 Geneva, Jericho, or where not ? please don't.  
 I hate such wriggling fibs. Due north, the pole !  
 Sin leads, as straight,—make no mistake,—to hell.  
 Well, come ; you never held that you were saints ;  
 Not even angels : but, the race looks up.  
 You improve, you'll swear : advance ; march ; grow less  
 bad ;  
 Less fatuous, less ferocious, every day ;  
 Grind out old flaws in ye ; don't, you say, as once,

Roast all who differ from you. Good, but listen.  
 As when some shore-bred urchin, spit o' the brine,  
 Hatched just above high-watermark, first quits  
 His boulder-cumber'd beach, to earn hard bread  
 From harder hands; and eyes, as slips the coast  
 From sight, cliff, jetty, his dad's nets, and cot;  
 And, last thing marked, the out-beetling village crag,  
 Capped,—no, not quite,—with granate toad, or eft  
 Hugeous, that creeps, creeps, but ne'er crowns the top;  
 Or stone-struck hag, still irritable, her spell  
 Tempestuous muttering o'er rock-chaldron; years,  
 Long years lapsed, he returns: within himself  
 All changed; enriched, mature; and nearing, views,—  
 Through something bitterer than the blinding spray,  
 Or is't a sudden spume-drift blurrs his sight?—  
 The unbettered spot:—a few deciduous huts  
 Replaced by sundry of like leaf; the same,  
 Surely the same, wild tangled knot of brats,  
 Sun-coiffed, sand-shod; one missing, who? the same  
 Witch-pot, that never boils, nor will, till earth  
 Spouts up again her molten slag; the same  
 Unspeakable monster scaling aye the height  
 It fails, footstalled, to reach. So you; you are,  
 Just what you were, just where, as once when I  
 First saw ye forty years since; and next week,  
 Or fifty centuries hence, 'twould be all one.  
 You are quite the same, in bulk; a trivial law,  
 A surface custom varied, here, as there  
 A moss-patch more, or less; but oh! the back  
 O' the creature; oh, the fissurous grin; the crawl;  
 Identic; unmistakeable. Zounds! I know ye.

*The Crowd.* And if ye know, what then?

*Lucifer.*

Why, I'll not say.

Come, I'll unroll your hearts and read them to ye.  
 'Tis a long strip, Death's ritual. Hear not less.  
 To say ye live is but to say ye have souls,  
 That ye have paid for them, and mean to play them,  
 Till some brave pleasure wins the golden stake,  
 And rakes it up to death as to a bank.  
 Ye live and die on what your souls will fetch;  
 And all are of different prices: therefore hell  
 Cannot well bargain for mankind in gross;  
 But each soul must be purchased, one by one.  
 This it is makes men rate themselves so high:  
 While truly ye are worth little: but to God  
 Ye are worth more than to yourselves. By sin  
 Ye wreak your spite against God; that ye know;  
 And knowing, will it. But I pray, I beg,  
 Act with some smack of justice to your Maker,  
 If not unto yourselves. Do! It is enough

To make the very Devil chide mankind ;  
Such baseness, such unthankfulness ! Why he  
Thanks God he is no worse. You don't do that.  
I say be just to God. Leave off these airs :  
Know your place ; speak to God ; and say, for once,  
Go first, Lord ; take your finger off your eye.  
It blocks the universe and God from sight.  
Think ye your souls are worth nothing to God ?  
Are they so small ? What can be great with God ?  
The sun and moon he wears on either arm,  
Seals of his sovereignty. What now, huge men !  
What will ye weigh against the Lord ? Yourself ?  
Bring out your balance : get in, man by man :  
Add earth, heaven, hell, the universe ; that's all.  
God puts his finger in the other scale,  
And up we bounce, a bubble. Nought is great  
Nor small, with God—for none but he can make  
The atom imperceptible, and none  
But he can make a world : he counts the orbs,  
He counts the atoms of the universe,  
And makes both equal ; both are infinite.  
Giving God honour, never underrate  
Yourself : after him ye are everything.  
But mind ! God's more than everything ; he is God.  
And what of me ? No, us ? no ! I mean the Devil ?  
Why see ye not he goes before both you  
And God ? Men say, as proud as Lucifer ;  
Pray who would not be proud with such a train ?  
Hath he not all the honour of the earth ?  
Why Mammon sits before a million hearths,  
Where God is bolted out from every house.  
He'll not forget that. Some day there'll be haply,  
A pretty general eviction. Then,  
Mind me, he'll break your bars and burst your doors,  
Which slammed against him once, and turn ye out,  
Roofless and shivering, 'neath the doom-storm ; heaven  
Shall crack above ye like a bell in fire,  
And bury all beneath its shining shards.  
He calls, ye hear not. Lo ! he comes—ye see not.  
No ; ye are deaf as a dead adder's ear :  
No ; ye are blind as never bat was blind,  
With a burning, bloodshot blindness of the heart ;  
A swimming, swollen, senselessness of soul.  
Listen. Whom love ye most ? Why, him to whom  
Ye in your turn are dearest. Need I name ?  
Oh no ! But all are devils to themselves ;  
And every man his own great foe. Hell gets  
Only the gleanings ; earth hath the full wain ;  
And hell is merry at its harvest home.  
But ye are generous to sin, and grudge

The gleaners nothing ; ask them, push them in.  
Let not an ear, a grain of sin be lost ;  
Gather it, grind it up ; it is our bread :  
We should be ashamed to waste the gifts of God.  
Why is the world so mad ? Why runs it thus  
Raving and howling round the universe ?  
Because the Devil bit it from the birth !  
The fault is all with him. Fear nothing, friends ;  
It is fear which beds the far to-come with fire,  
As the sun does the west : but the sun sets ;  
Well : still ye tremble—tremble, first at light,  
Then darkness. Tremble ! ye dare not believe.  
No, cowards ! sooner than believe ye would die ;  
Die with the black lie flapping on your lips,  
Like the soot-flake upon a burning bar.  
Be merry, happy if ye can : think never  
Of him who slays your souls, nor him who saves.  
There is time enough for that when ye are a-dying.  
Keep your old ways ; it matters not this once.  
Be brave ; ye are not men whom meat and wine  
Serve to remind but of the sacrament ;  
To whom sweet shapes and tantalizing smiles  
Bring up the Devil and the ten commandments ;  
And so on. But I said the world must end.  
I see some old men 'mong ye, and they know,  
Discomfortably enough, the heart in age,  
Lower and lower, like the wintering sun,  
Sets daily, and is troubled more to rise.  
Let them be rather gay to miss earth's end.  
I am sorry ; it is such a pleasant world ;  
With all its faults it is perfect—to a fault ;  
And you, of course, end with it. Now how long  
Will the world take to die ? I know ye place  
Great faith upon death-bed repentances ;  
The suddener the better. I know ye often  
Begin to think of praying and repenting ;  
But second thoughts come and ye are worse than ever ;  
As over new white snow a filthy thaw.  
Ye do amaze me verily. How long  
Will ye take heart on your own wickedness,  
And God's forbearance ? Have ye cast it up ?  
Come, now ; the year, and month, day, hour, and minute,  
Sin's golden cycle ? Know ye, pray, how long  
Exactly, heaven will grant ye ; how long God,—  
Who when he had slain the world and wasted it,  
Hung up his bow in heaven, as in his hall  
A warrior after battle—will yet bear  
Your contumely and scorn of his best gifts,—  
Man's mockery of man ? But never mind !  
Some of us are magnificently good,

And hold the head up high, like a giraffe  
You, in particular, and you ; and you.  
Good men are here and there, I know ; but then  
You must excuse me if I mention this,  
My duty is to tell it you ; the world,  
Like a black block of marble, jagged with white,  
As with a vein of lightning petrified,  
Looks blacker than without such ; looks, in truth,  
So gross the heathen, gross the Christian too,  
Like the original darkness of void space,  
Hardened. Instead of justice, love, and grace,  
Each worth to man the mission of a God,  
Injustice, hate, uncharitableness,  
Triequal reign round earth, hell's trinity, sure.  
Ye think ye never can be bad enough ;  
Nay, as ye sink in sin ye rise in hope.  
And let the worst come to the worst, you say,  
There always will be time to turn ourselves,  
And cry for half an hour or so to God :  
Salvation, sure, is not so very hard ;  
It need not take one long ; and half an hour  
Is quite as much as we can spare for it.  
We have no time for pleasures. Business ! business !  
No ! ye shall perish suddenly and unsaved.  
The world shall stand still with a rending jar,  
As though it struck at sea : or, as when once,  
An arm Titanian, say not whose, but jogged  
By earthquakes, wryed the pole, and o'er the dry  
Poured competitive mains. The unsleepful sea,  
Mooning and bellowing now round caverned coasts,  
Now, drawing hard through thirty thousand teeth,  
Upon the shingly shore, his pauseful breath,  
Like some monogamous monster which hath lost,  
Poor fool ! his mate ; and every rock-hole searched  
By torch of foam-light, dogs her steps with sad,  
Superfluous faithfulness, shall rest at last,  
Nor wist which way to turn him ; ebb nor flow  
No more to choose. All elements as though smote  
With reasonablest disloyalty to man's  
Usurpful claim, their constrained suit shall cease,  
And natural service : men their mightiest wont,  
Their meanest use and craft. The halls where parle  
The heads of nations shall be dumb with death.  
The priest shall dipping, die : can man save man ?  
Is water God ? The counsellor, wise fool,  
Drop down amid his quirks and sacred lies,  
The judge, while dooming unto death some wretch,  
Shall meet at once his own death, doom and judge.  
The doctor, watch in hand and patient's pulse,  
Shall feel his own heart cease its beats, and fall.

Professors shall spin out, and students strain  
 Their brains no more. Art, science, toil, shall cease,  
 Commerce. The ship shall her own plummet seek,  
 And sound the sea herself and depths of death.  
 At the first turn Death shall cut off the thief,  
 And dash the gold-bag in his yellow brain.  
 The gambler, reckoning gains, shall drop a piece :  
 Stoop down and there see death ; —look up, there God.  
 The wanton, temporizing with decay,  
 And qualifying every line which vice  
 Writes bluntly on the brow, inviting scorn,  
 Shall pale through plastered red : and the loose low sot  
 See clear, for once, through his misty, o'erbrimmed eye.  
 The just, if there be any, die in prayer.  
 Death shall be everywhere among your marts ;  
 And giving bills which no man may decline—  
 Drafts upon hell one moment after date.  
 Then shall your outcries tremble amid the stars :  
 Terrors shall be about ye like a wind ;  
 And fears fall down upon ye like four walls.

*Festus.* Yon man looks frightened.

*Lucifer.*

Then it is time to stop.

I hope I have done no good. He will soon forget  
 His soul. Flesh soaks it up as sponge does water.

*The Crowd.* He's a mad ranter : down with him.

*Festus.*

Let him be !

*Lucifer.* Stand by me, Festus ! and I will by thee.  
 Said I not what they were ? When am I wrong ?  
 Why, heaven and earth ! this is the second time  
 I have run for my life.

*Festus.*

Nay, nay, come back ! I'll see  
 These rustics harm thee not : they would chair thee round  
 The market-place, knew they but whom thou art.  
 I'll make it mine to soothe them for a space.  
 Peace there, my friends ! one minute ; let us pray.  
 Grant us, O God ! that in thy holy love  
 The universal people of the world  
 May grow more great and happy every day ;  
 Mightier, wiser, humbler, too, towards thee.  
 And that all ranks, all classes, callings, states  
 Of life, so far as such seem right to thee,  
 May mingle into one, like sister trees,  
 And so in one stem flourish : that all laws  
 And powers of government be based and used  
 In good, and for the people's sake ; that each  
 May feel himself of consequence to all,  
 And act as though all saw him ; that the whole,  
 The mass of every nation, may so do  
 As is most worthy of the next to God ;  
 For a whole people's souls, each one worth more

Than a mere world of matter, make, combined,  
A something godlike, something like to thee.  
We pray thee for the welfare of all men.  
Let monarchs who love truth and freedom feel  
The happiness of safety, and respect  
From those they rule, and guardianship from thee.  
Let them remember they are set on thrones  
As representatives, not as substitutes,  
Of nations, to implead with God and man.  
Let tyrants who hate truth, or fear the free,  
Know that to rule in slavery and error,  
For the mere ends of personal pomp and power,  
Is such a sin as doth deserve a hell  
To itself sole. Let both remember, Lord !  
They are but things like-natured with all nations ;  
That mountains issue out of plains, and not  
Plains out of mountains, and so likewise kings  
Are of the people, not the people of kings.  
And let all feel, the rulers and the ruled,  
All classes and all countries, that the world  
Is thy great halidom ; that thou art king,  
Lord, only owner and possessor. Grant  
That nations may now see, it is not kings,  
Nor priests, they need fear so much as themselves ;  
That if they keep but true to themselves, and free,  
Sober, enlightened, godly ; mortal men  
Become impassible as air ; one great  
And indestructible substance as the sea.  
Let all on thrones and judgment-seats reflect  
How dreadful thy revenge through nations is  
On those who wrong them ; but do thou grant, Lord,  
That when wrongs are to be redressed, such may  
Be done with mildness, speed, and firmness ; not  
With violence or hate, whereby one wrong  
Translates another ; both to thee abhorrent.  
The bells of time are ringing changes fast.  
Grant, Lord ! that each fresh peal may usher in  
An era of advancement, that each change  
Prove an effectual, lasting, happy gain.  
And we beseech thee, overrule, O God !  
All civil contests to the good of all ;  
All party and religious differences  
To honourable ends, whether secured  
Or lost ; and let all strife, political  
Or social, spring from conscientious aims,  
And have a generous, self-ennobling end,  
Man's good, and thine own glory in view always.  
The best may then fail and the worst succeed,  
Alike with honour. We beseech thee, Lord !  
For bodily strength, but more especially

For the soul's health and safety. We entreat thee  
In thy great mercy to decrease our wants,  
And add autumnal increase to the comforts  
Which tend to keep men innocent, and load  
Their hearts with thanks to thee as trees in bearing:  
The blessings of friends, families, and homes,  
And kindnesses of kindred. And we pray  
That men may rule themselves in faith in God,  
In charity to each other, and in hope  
Of their own soul's salvation: that the mass,  
The millions in all nations, may be trained,  
From their youth upwards, in a nobler mode,  
To loftier and more liberal ends. We pray  
Above all things, Lord! that all men be free  
From bondage, whether of the mind or body;  
The bondage of religious bigotry,  
And bald antiquity; servility  
Of thought or speech to rank and power; be all  
Free as they ought to be in mind and soul,  
As well as by state-birth right; and that Mind,  
Time's giant pupil, may right soon attain  
Majority, and speak and act for himself.  
Incline thou to our prayers, and grant, O Lord!  
That all may have enough, and some safe mean  
Of worldly goods and honours, by degrees,  
Take place, if practicable, in the fitness  
And fulness of thy time. And we beseech thee  
That truth no more be gagged, nor conscience dungeoned,  
Nor science be impeached of godlessness;  
Nor faith be circumscribed, which as to thee,  
And the soul's self affairs, is infinite;  
But that all men may have due liberty  
To speak an honest mind, in every land;  
Encouragement to study, leave to act  
As conscience orders. We entreat thee, Lord!  
For thy Son's sake, for total man's, in whose  
Name first spake he, prophet supreme of earth,  
As man's son thine, to take away reproach  
Of all kinds from thy church; and all temptation  
Of pomp or power political, that none  
May err in the end for which they were appointed  
To any of its orders, low or high;  
And no ambition, of a worldly cast,  
Leaven the love of souls unto whose care  
They feel propelled by thy most holy spirit.  
Be every church established, Lord! in truth.  
Let all who preach the word, by the word live,  
In moderate estate; and in thy church,—  
One, universal, and invisible,  
World-wards, yet manifest unto itself,

May it seem good, dear Saviour, in thy sight,  
That orders be distinguished, not by wealth,  
But piety and power of teaching souls.  
Equalize labour, Lord ! and recompense.  
Let not a hundred humble pastors starve,  
In this or any land of Christendom,  
While one or two, impalaced, mitred, throned  
And banquetted, burlesque, if not blaspheme  
The holy penury of the son of Man ;  
The fastings, the footwanderings, and the preachings  
Of Christ and his first followers. Oh that the son  
Might come again ! There should be no more war,  
No more want, no more sickness ; with a touch,  
He should cure all disease, and with a word,  
All woe ; and with a look to heaven, a prayer,  
Provide bread for a million at a time.  
But till that perfect advent, grant us, Lord !  
That all good institutions, orders, claims,  
Charitably proposed, or in the aid  
Of thy divine foundation, may much prosper,  
And more of them be raised and nobly filled ;  
That thy word may be taught throughout all lands,  
And save souls daily to the thrones of heaven !—  
Enriched, empowered, emboldened by thy Spirit,  
We dare to ask for all things in thy name ;  
We dare to pray for all that live or die.  
Man dies to man ; but all to thee, God, live.  
We pray thee, therefore, for the general dead ;  
Man's universal race, extinct in flesh.  
But in the spirit immortal ; not alone  
For those who died unwitting of all truth,  
But whose souls opening after like a flower  
In finer air, may compass more than we ;  
Not only for the sage, saint, seer of old  
Who saw thy truth but darkly, felt thy light  
But feebly, yet, unfaltering, held the faith,  
That the good God who made all, all decrees,  
Allots and blesses all, in this life, man  
May trust like lovingly for life to come.  
Not only therefore for the wise of yore,  
But for the mass unwise of all times, now,  
Passed and to come ; who boast not of thy love,  
Nor glory in thy name ; but spurn thy law,  
Nor keep thy precepts ; for the wicked man  
Who hates thy righteousness ; and for the good  
Who his own preacheth ; for the scorner who  
Despiseth thy humility, most high !  
The ignorant who thy providence misdoubts ;  
The dark inverted soul who sees not thee ;  
The bigot who maligns thee, Lord ! for all,

Quick, dead, we ask thy boundless mercy, more  
Than all sin, all defect, as infinite  
O'erlaps all finites. But by us be none  
Condemned. Shall culprits take the judge's seat?  
Christ's lesson of forgiveness mote not we  
Forget. If they who wrought earth's crowning crime  
Were of his intercession worthy, Lord!  
Of whom shall fellow-sinners, like ourselves,  
Despair? To whom shall mercy hope deny?  
And we entreat thee, that all men whom thou  
Hast gifted with great minds may love thee well,  
And praise thee, for their powers, and use them most  
Humbly and holily, and, lever-like,  
Act but in lifting up the mass of mind  
About them; knowing well that they shall be  
Questioned by thee of deeds the pen hath done,  
Or caused, or glozed; inspire them with delight  
And power to treat of noble themes and things,  
Worthily, and to leave the low and mean;  
Things born of vice or day-lived fashion, in  
Their naked native folly: make them know  
Fine thoughts are wealth, for the right use of which  
Men are and ought to be accountable,  
If not to thee, to those they influence.  
Grant this, we pray thee, and that all who read  
Or utter noble thoughts may make them theirs,  
And thank God for them, to the betterment  
Of their succeeding life; that all who lead  
The general sense and taste, too apt, perchance,  
To be led, keep in mind the mighty good  
They may achieve, and are in conscience bound,  
And duty, to attempt unceasingly  
To compass. Grant us, all-maintaining sire!  
That all the great mechanic aids to toil  
Man's skill hath formed, found, rendered, whether used  
In multiplying works of mind, or aught  
To obviate the thousand wants of life,  
May much avail to human welfare now;  
And in all ages henceforth and for ever.  
Let their effect be, Lord! to lighten labour,  
And give more room to mind; and leave the poor  
Some time for self-improvement. Let them not  
Be forced to grind the bones out of their arms  
For bread, but have some space to think and feel  
Like moral and immortal creatures. God!  
Have mercy on them till such time shall come;  
Look thou with pity on all lesser crimes,  
Thrust on men almost when devoured by want,  
Wretchedness, ignorance, and outcast life.  
Have mercy on the rich, too, who pass by

The means they hold at hand to fill their minds  
With serviceable knowledge for themselves,  
And fellows ; and support not the good cause  
Of the world's better future. Oh, reward  
All such who do, with peace of heart, and power  
For greater good. Have mercy, Lord ! on each  
And all, for all men need it equally.  
May peace, and industry, and commerce, weld  
Into one land all nations of the world,  
Rekinning those the deluge once estranged.  
Oh ! may all help each other in good things,  
Mental and moral, and of bodily kind.  
Vouchsafe, kind God ! thy blessing to this isle,  
Specially. May our country ever lead  
The world, for she is worthiest ; and may all  
Profit by her example, and adopt  
Her course, wherever great, or free, or just.  
May all her subject colonies and powers  
Have of her freedom freely, as a child  
Receiveth of its parents. Let not rights  
Be wrested from us, to our own reproach,  
But granted. We may make the whole world free,  
And be as free ourselves as ever, more !  
If policy or self-defence call forth  
Our forces to the field, let us in thee  
First trust, and in thy name we shall o'ercome ;  
For we will only wage the righteous cause.  
Let us not conquer nations for ourselves,  
But for thee, Lord ! who hast predestined us  
To fight the battles of the future now,  
And so have done with war before thou comest.  
Till then, Lord God of armies ! let our foes  
Have their swords broken and their cannon burst,  
And their strong cities levelled ; and while we  
War faithfully and righteously, improve,  
Civilise, Christianise, the lands we win  
From savage or from nature, thou, O God !  
Wilt aid and hallow conquest, as of old,  
Thine own immediate nation's. But we pray  
That all mankind may make one brotherhood,  
And love and serve each other ; that all wars  
And feuds die out of nations ; whether those  
Whom the sun's hot light darkens, or ourselves  
Whom he treats fairly, or the northern tribes  
Whom ceaseless snows and starry winters blench ;  
Savage or civilised, let every race,  
Red, black, or white, olive, or tawny-skinned,  
Settle in peace and swell the gathering hosts  
Of the great Prince of Peace. Oh ! may the hour  
Soon come when all false gods, false creeds, false prophets,

Allowed in thy good purpose for a time,  
 Demolished, the great world shall be at last  
 God's mercy-seat, the heritage of a pure  
 Humanity, made divine, and the possession  
 Of the spirit of comfort and wisdom ; shall all be  
 One land, one home, one friend, one faith, one law ;  
 Its ruler God, its practice righteousness,  
 Its life peace. For the one true faith we pray ;  
 There is but one in heaven, and there shall be  
 But one on earth, the same which is in heaven.  
 Prophecy is more true than history.  
 Grant us our prayers, we pray, Lord ! in the name  
 And for the sake of universal man,  
 Who thee like Saviour as Creator, holds  
 Over all worlds, one holy Spirit God.

*The Crowd.* Amen !

*Lucifer.* Well, friends, we'll sing a hymn ; then part.  
 I give it out, and you sing—all of you.

Oh ! earth is cheating earth  
 From age to age for ever ;  
 She laughs at faith and worth,  
 And dreams she shall die never ;  
 Never, never, never !  
 And dreams she shall die never.

And hell is cursing hell  
 From age to age for ever ;  
 Its groans ring out the knell  
 Of souls that may die never ;  
 Never, never, never !  
 Of souls that may die never.

But heaven is blessing heaven  
 From age to age for ever ;  
 And its thanks to God are given  
 For bliss that can die never ;  
 Never, never, never !  
 For bliss that can die never.

My blessing be upon ye all ; now go !

*Festus.* I wonder what these people make of thee.

*Lucifer.* Ay, manner's a great matter.

*Festus.*

They deserve

All the rebuke thou gavest them, and more.  
 What mountains of delusion men have reared !  
 How every age hath hustled on to build  
 Its shadowy mole—its monumental dream !  
 How faith and fancy, in the mind of man,  
 Have spuriously immingled, and how much  
 Shall pass away for aye, as before yon sun,  
 Lord, he alike, of steadfastness and change,  
 The visionary landscapes of the skies ;  
 The golden capes far stretching into heaven ;

The snow-piled cloud crags; the bright wingèd isles,  
 Which dot the deep impassive ocean air,  
 Like a disbanded rainbow, of all hues,  
 Fit for translated fairy's Paradise;  
 Or as before the eye of musing child,  
 The faces fancy forms in clouds, or fire,  
 Of glowing angel, now; now, darkening fiend's.  
 Arts, superstition, creeds, philosophy,  
 This solid called because material,—each  
 Hath held in turn man's mind, betrayed and mocked;  
 Thou, too, vain science, who wouldst level man,  
 And all create with God, thine hour is come;  
 Thy lips were lined with the immortal lie,  
 And, dyed with all the look of truth; men saw,  
 Believed, embraced, detested, cast thee off.  
 Thou wouldst not take in vain God's name. Wouldst take  
 His being into thine apprehension? No!  
 Those lights the morn of truth's immortal day,  
 As thou didst falsely swear them, have not all  
 Vanished, the mere auroras of an hour?  
 Yet didst thou vow to gather up, clear again,  
 The fallen waters of humanity, smoothe  
 The flaw from an eye; piece even a pounded pearl.

*Lucifer.* I bet she failed.

*Festus.* Thank God, I am a man,  
 Not a philosopher.

*Lucifer.* Of that brand, oh no:  
 Not a materialist. Another cast,  
 Science may yet succeed.

*Festus.* She never can.  
 Rivers may rot the root of oak fire-bolted;  
 Revive it, never.

*Lucifer.* True; for once be gay.

*Festus.* Oh, let me to the hills, where none but God  
 Can overlook us; for I hate to breathe  
 The breaths, and think the thoughts, of other men,  
 In close and clouded cities where the skies  
 Frown like an angry father, mournfully.  
 Oh, but I love the hills; love loneliness,  
 Allwhere of desert shore, or wold scant-lived.  
 Where there is nothing else, there is always God.  
 Yes, wearied soon of borough crowds, I love  
 My fellows most at arm's length, not too near—  
 In the mid distance, somewhat,—nature seems  
 A holier mediatress 'tween God and man,  
 Mean mightier than aught else. But when alone  
 Braced by life-searching thought, I go to meet  
 Heaven on the hills, my soul, with love of his  
 Creations filled, I feel expand at ease,  
 In sensefulness of Deity; and amidst

Star-mimicked snows, indigenous of the skies,  
 Conscious of spirit made capable to accept  
 Celestial intimations, and in deeps,  
 Deeps luminous and profound of utter thought,  
 Implunged, of God's perfections infinite,  
 His simple ways I muse, all kind ; him, soul  
 Substantial of the universe, and his ends,  
 Divining better from those goodliest acts  
 In world foundations traceable, than in tomes  
 Named revelative, too oft to his nature false,  
 His boundless bounteousness. And, wotting well,  
 How to be sought he loves, not only in prayer  
 And praise, not only in virtue helped, wrong crushed,  
 But for himself essential, seek betimes,  
 Softly and solitary, nor deem to miss  
 Always the spot surpriseful, where he might  
 Self secretive, have hidden him ; there no less  
 Conceivably, than in columned temples ; now,  
 In sea halls echoing tidal thunders, walled  
 With wave-scooped rock, piled mightily crag on crag,  
 Like masonry of gods ; in chasmy caves,  
 Cool, oozy, unsuspect of brangling crowds,  
 Where ocean oft his white steeds stalls ; impaved  
 With gore-dyed granite, as though God, concerned  
 For private weal and suffering, had in wrath  
 And very truth, for ravaged lands, and fields  
 Depopulated, some pest enorme, hide-winged,  
 Horn-lidded as to his eyes, trode down to death,  
 And drowned in his own poisonous blood, gall-greened ;  
 Then, 'neath earth's threshold buried, hot ;—and now  
 Midst woods, O awful woods, ye natural fanes,  
 Whose very air is holy, and we breathe  
 Of God : he, while we worship, there for us.

*Lucifer.* All this done leisurely, and some other things  
 Of like necessity, say, and a green old age  
 Waits sweetly both. Had I more faults than one  
 My favourite failing would be found, I fear,  
 In fondness for society. Much beside  
 Mountains and groves me 'lure.

*Festus.* Ah true ; there's man,  
 So rich in wants.

*Lucifer.* And woman, wealthier still  
 In that particular, seeing she wants just now,  
 To want her master. There are maids I know  
 Look to be asked for yet, ere they grow grey.

*Festus.* Oh, but I am put to the ban, this day.

*Lucifer.* Let grief  
 Weep her eyes dry to their last tear, to-night ;  
 She hath a trick of brightening up, ere morn,  
 Would startle many a ghost, could he but wait.

Exile mayhap, who knows? commute, our time,  
 With such accomplishments as I to thee  
 Own owed, such gifts and potencies as erst  
 Were promised, will be well filled up. Meanwhile  
 It is fit that something more were done for man,  
 By those who aim to benefit him, than aught  
 He now enjoys. Some social Paradise,  
 Some practicable Elysium, canst not plan,  
 Devise, imagine, scheme? It is scarce my cue.

*Festus.* Long have I pondered such. But ne'er, while  
 earth's

Incongruous nations each, as now, its end  
 Selfish would gain by force or fraud, exists  
 One chance that good men's dreams be verified.  
 Never till peace one-minded sway the whole.

*Lucifer.* The sole equality now on earth is death;  
 The rich have ne'er enough of everything;  
 The poor have never enough of anything.  
 I am for judgment: that will settle all.  
 Nothing is to be done without destruction.  
 Death is the universal salt of states;  
 And blood the base of all things, law and war.  
 Society broken up and well ground down;  
 The world in short macadamised, might serve;—  
 The road to hell wants mending. Come away!

*Festus.* But can such peace be attained without all  
 war?

*Lucifer.* Think so.

*Festus.* Who lives to see were surely blessed.  
 And now, take note, I climb yon hills.

*Lucifer.* Yon hills?  
 There's no one, sure, lives there, who—

*Festus.* When shall I  
 Return?

*Lucifer.* I'll think. When gorse, say's, out of bloom.

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## VI.

Our next

Adventure seems to promise fair, for be there  
 One scene, in life whence evil may be ruled  
 Absent, 'tis sure pure early love. But not  
 Love sole, with the world untried before one's eye,  
 Eager to search all being, though of gross cares  
 Freed, and in easefullest obscurity lapped,  
 Can make soul happy. Doubts of things divine,—  
 Generate spontaneously, or thought inborne  
 By rumour of the world, as pestful seeds  
 Mist-sown, or of spirit in self-forced fellowship  
 Colleagued, from far conveyed ; as dominant soul  
 Remote Seer's tranced intelligence shakes,—distract.  
 But see love's star now rise, which, ere it set,  
 Shall, many a mischance bettered, perfect life,  
 And lead to heavenward ; hear of holy ends,  
 Goaded into man's heart ; and worth of faith.

*Alcove—Lawn and Garden.*

FESTUS and CLARA.

*Festus.* Days are to me of light when I rejoice  
 In earth, man, all things round me, and strong faith  
 Rules, as a prevalent wind the world, my mind ;  
 The stars instil their virtues in the schemes  
 I muse, so much doth generous reason joy  
 In rich forecasts of full-orbed happiness ;  
 And the all-fatherly Deity smiles. Anon,  
 Come surging from afar, dark doubts like wrecks  
 Of fore-spent storms we deemed we had done with. Wave  
 On wave of darkness, like the shadowy tides  
 Of that tenebrous sea which billowing breaks  
 Soundless, on lunar shores, o'erfloods my soul ;  
 And nothing satisfies. All ends seem mixed  
 With means that make for evil, and if I see  
 God's hand, it is everywhere distinct from things ;  
 Moulding them not, nor guiding.

*Clara.* How ! Life's goods,  
 Heaven's gifts, health, beauty ; earth's, wealth, culture,  
 love,  
 Are means, not ends. A mind absorbed in means  
 Means but a mind that's mean, which, endless, errs.

*Festus.* It may be, nay, 'tis probable. Say it's true.

*Clara.* Let us do more than this. Have noblest ends :  
 Ends which will bear the eye of God, nor flinch.

*Festus.* But this means strife. Why should I strive  
 with men ?  
 No ends have I to gain that man can give.

*Clara.* But thou, I thought, hadst highest intents, and these

It was that drew my soul to thine, resolved,  
I deemed, to head the advance of men. And now,  
Wouldst note at ease the bubble of fountains rise,  
Or count the May-thorn's bloomlets as they fall,  
Fragrant, in faëry showers? Shall I attune  
Mine harp-strings strained into their subtense beam,  
Luminous and hollow as is a golden flame,  
To songs commemorative of perfect bliss  
Earth now enjoys; of war, of woe extinct,  
Sin, ignorance, penury? Or are all these  
Ills, yet to be o'ermastered?

*Festus.* These be thoughts  
Do scare the spirit that rouses them.

*Clara.* May be.  
And sometimes self-love scared is self-love cured.

*Festus.* Turn for the hour to things that leave us not  
Inconsolable i' the end; to know the day  
Is filling up with feelings that will last  
Memorially, all life.

*Clara.* All time, I hope.

*Festus.* Hope, and its luns, its tides to their very  
heart,  
Ebbd out, with me are at dead water. Come!  
Let us consider deeplier, things that be.  
What happy things, to wit, are youth, love, sunshine;  
How sweet to feel the sun upon the heart;  
To know it is lighting up the rosy blood;  
And with all joyous feelings making shine  
The dark breast, like a grot with prisms spar.

*Clara.* Yes, there are feelings so serene and sweet,  
Plumed as with musical lightness, that they more  
Than make amends for their passingness, and God's  
Condition balance to surcease for aye;  
As yon light fleecy cloudlet, floating along,  
Like golden down from some high angel's wing,  
So breaks and beautifies the blue, we lose  
Just reckoning of its imminent end. And love  
Hath some such very semblance, or I err  
At large. I wonder if I could ever love  
Another. How I should start to see on the sward  
A shadow not thine own, arm-linked with mine.

*Festus.* Thou art happy, I doubt not. I, if nothing  
else,  
I have renewed my youth.

*Clara.* When wert thou deemed  
Aged?

*Festus.* Oh! thou knowest not then, how old I am.  
Know in my brain I bear each several age

Whose spirit I have by study absorbed, and so  
 Assimilated, that morally we are one.  
 If not yet accurately defined my years,  
 I am of full age ; I have come into mine own,  
 By grief-right. Take me, peer of want and woe ;  
 Proud thrall of doubt, my liege.

*Clara.* Be not so sad.  
 See, here's a garland I have bound for thee.

*Festus.* Nay, crown thyself: it will suit thee better,  
 love.

Place wreaths of everlasting flowers on tombs,  
 And deck with fading beauties forms that fade.  
 Put it away, I will no crown save this ;  
 And could the line of dust which here I trace  
 Upon my brow, but warrant dust beneath,—  
 Nor more, for aye ; or could this bubble frame  
 Informed with soul, lashed from the stream of life  
 By its own impetus, but burst at once  
 And vanish, part on high and part below,  
 I would be happy, nor would envy death :  
 Could I, like heaven's bolt, earthing, quench myself,  
 This moment would I burn me out a grave.

*Clara.* What canst thou mean ?

*Festus.* Mean, is there not a future ?  
 Passed, present, coming, be accursèd, each ?

*Clara.* Oh say not so. The future sure is filled  
 With promises, are not even promises sweet  
 From one we love and trust, of bliss. And we,  
 Shall we not ever live and love, as now ?

*Festus.* For love, I know not: live I fear we must.

*Clara.* And love, because we then are happiest, love ;  
 We shall lack nothing having love ; and we,  
 We must be happy everywhere, we twain.  
 Life spiritual, changeless even as is the sea  
 In essence, though of variablest aspect,—  
 Rolling the same through all earth's ages, now  
 O'er mountain tops where only snow abides,  
 And the sunbeam hurries coldly by, or, o'er  
 The vales, ship guesting now, of some old world,  
 Older than ancient man's,—is ever great,  
 Clear, self-continative, reflecting heaven :  
 So then with us. Our natures raised, refined  
 From these poor forms, our days shall pass in peace  
 And love; no thought of human littleness  
 Shall cross our high calm souls, shining and pure  
 As the gold gates of heaven. Like some deep lake  
 Upon a mountain summit they shall rest  
 High above cloud and storm of life like this,  
 All peace and power and passionless purity.  
 Or, if a thought of other troublous times

Like a chance raindrop, ruffle but for a moment  
 Their heavenward face, it shall regardless pass,  
 Recordless, momentary.

*Festus.* Oh! who so wise  
 As thou in things incredible, things unknown?

*Clara.* I love to meditate upon bliss to come.  
 Not that I am unhappy here, but given  
 To hope more perfect bliss may rectify  
 The lower feeling we enjoy now. Earth,  
 This world, this life is not enough for us;  
 They are nothing to our amplitude of mind;  
 For place we must have space, for time must have  
 Eternity, and for a spirit godhood.

*Festus.* Mind means not happiness; power not good.

*Clara.* True bliss  
 In holy life seek, charity menwards, love  
 To God. Why should such duties cease, such powers  
 Decay, of nature spiritual, boundless scope,  
 And worthy of high uplifted life for ever?  
 Man, like the airborne eagle who remains  
 On earth only to feed and sleep and die;  
 But whose delight is on his lonely wing,  
 Wide-sweeping as a mind, to force the skies  
 High as the light-fall, ere, begirt with clouds  
 It dash this nether world, immortal man,  
 If measuring not with equal mind the All,  
 His aspirations yet by nought below  
 Divinity coped, up rushes, aye, towards heaven,  
 As his essential home. O faith! most pure  
 Of things; the world's sole honour!

*Festus.* Come, what's faith?  
 Let us make believe like children; faith? A tower  
 Reared of round boulders on fear's quakeful bog;  
 A belfry built of dominoes on the palm  
 A pulse's throb o'erthrows;—that's my faith. Thine?  
 Proceed; past doubt thy faith works miracles.  
 Work one in me now. Granted I have sinned,  
 Sin would I not for ever. I repent.  
 I would again be blameless. Hear, Lord. Speak  
 To me thy child in thine invisible likeness,  
 The wind, as once of yore. Let me be pure;  
 Let me be once more as an innocent child!  
 As ere the clear could trouble me; when life  
 Was sweet and calm as is a sister's kiss;  
 And not the wild and whirlwind touch of passion  
 Which though it scarcely 'light upon the lips,  
 With breathless swiftness sucks the soul out of sight,  
 So that we lose all thought of it. Speaks he? No!  
 Though meanest of all possible miracles,  
 The vast inviolate silence answers, No.

*Clara.* Dost thou dictate to God?

*Festus.* Now God forbid;

But faith and all its promises and forms,—  
And save religion's forms what know men,—show  
On heaven's part, most divine indifference.

*Clara.* True faith nor biddeth nor abideth form.  
Knee bended, eye uplift, with heart prostrate;  
Is all man need to render, all God asks.  
What to the faith are forms? A passing speck,  
A crow upon the sky. God's worship is  
That only he inspires! and his bright words  
Writ in the red-leaved volume of the heart,  
Return to him in prayer, as dew to heaven.  
We quit the right way wantonly, and life  
Call error: truth we shun, court soulless wit;  
And say it is ignorance to adore, Our peace,  
Our proper good we rarely seek or make,  
Mindless of soul's beneficent powers and end  
Immortal, as the pearl is of its worth,  
The rose its scent, the wave its purity.

*Festus.* My soul is like to die of unproved ends.

*Clara.* But helps not here thy friend the spirit to arm  
With proofs irrefutable of God's good rule  
Life deathless, conquered ill?

*Festus.* With proof of nothing.

He hath a dispensation, but of doubt,  
Which umbers all my days. Spheres are, he avers,  
And souls migrate in death to other stars—  
Where contraries exist not; well's not well,  
Nor ill ill; verity proveable not.

*Clara.* The false one.

Truth is the same in every world as here.

*Festus.* Quit we these saddening themes. My mind  
too long

Hath been begloomed by them. Sing then; for I love  
Thy singing sacred as the sound of hymns,  
On some bright sabbath morning, mid the moor,  
Where all is still save praise, of rustic saints  
Gathered beneath some wide-branched oak; high heaven  
Sheds on the spirit its kindred calm; hard by,  
The ripening grain its bright beard shakes i' the sun;  
The wild bee hums more solemnly; the deep sky,  
The fresh green grass, the sunny brook, the sun,  
All look as if they knew the day, the hour,  
And felt with man the need and joy of thanks.

*Clara.* I cannot sing love's lightsome lays; thou knowst  
Who can; but none who love as I; for I  
Thy soul love, and would save it, Festus. Listen:

Is heaven a place where pearly streams  
 Glide over silver sand ?  
 Like childhood's rosy dazzling dreams  
 Of some far faëry land ?  
 Is heaven a clime where diamond dew  
 Glitter on fadeless flowers ?  
 And mirth and music ring aloud  
 From amaranthine bowers ?

Ah no ; not such, not such is heaven !  
 Surpassing far all these ;  
 Such cannot be the guerdon given  
 Man's wearied soul to please.  
 For saint and sinner here below  
 Such vain to be have proved :  
 And the pure spirit will despise  
 Whatever the sense hath loved.

There we shall dwell with Sire and Son,  
 And with the mother-maid,  
 And with the Holy Spirit, one !  
 In glory like arrayed :  
 And not to one created thing  
 Shall our embrace be given ;  
 But all our joy shall be in God :  
 For only God is heaven.

*Festus.* I know that thou dost love me. I, in vain  
 Strive to love aught of earth or heaven but thee,  
 My first, last, only love : nor shall another  
 Tempt even my steadfast heart. Like far-off stars,  
 A thousand, sweet and bright and wondrous fair,  
 A thousand deathless miracles of beauty,  
 They shall e'er pass at all but eyeless distance,  
 And never mix with thy love, but be lost,  
 All meanly in its moonlike lustrousness.

*Clara.* How still the air : the tree-tops stir no leaf,  
 But stand and peer on heaven's bright face as though  
 It slept, and they were loving it : they would not  
 Have the skies see them move, for summers, would they ?  
 See that sweet cloud. It is watching us I am certain.  
 What have we here t<sup>o</sup> make thee stay one second ?  
 Away ! thy sisters wait thee in the west,  
 The blushing bridesmaids of the sun and sea.  
 Would I were like thee, little cloud, to live  
 Ever in heaven ; or, seeking earth, let fall  
 My spirit down only in droplets bright of love ;  
 Sleep on night's dewy lap ; and the next dawn,  
 Back with the sun to heaven ; and so for aye,  
 Sweet cloudlet ! Senseless seeming things there are,  
 One must, almost, count happy. Oft have I watched  
 A gossamer line sighing itself along  
 The air, as it seemed, and so thin, thin and bright,  
 Like a stray threadlet woven in light's gay loom,

I have envied it, a moment, followed: oft  
 Eye-tracked the sea-bird's down, blown o'er the wave,  
 Now touching it, spirited again, aloft,  
 Now out of sight, now nigh, till in some bright fringe  
 Of streamy foam, as in a cage, at last,  
 A playful death it dies;—and mourned its death.

*Festus.* Surely thou camest straightwise from the stars,  
 And instantly from heaven: thy calm bright thought,  
 Pure as the roseate snow on polar plains,  
 In starlike flakelets falling, stamped with proof  
 Of its high geniture, suits and soothes my mind.  
 O well thou deemest of celestial things,  
 And high-born duties dedicate to earth.  
 To dignify the day with deeds of good,  
 And eve constellate with all holy thoughts,  
 This is to live, and let our lives narrate,  
 In a new version, solemn and sublime,  
 The grand old legend of humanity.  
 But think'st thou now the future is a state  
 Like positive with this, or e'er can be aught  
 Than another present, toilsome, full of cares,  
 Duties, perhaps; that soul will e'er be nigher  
 To God than now, save as may seem by mind's  
 Debility, as from weakness of the eye,  
 And the illusions matter forms, yon sun  
 Shows, hot and wearied, resting upon the hill?  
 It would be well I think to live as though  
 Nought more were to be looked for; to be good  
 Because it is best here; and leave hope and fear  
 For lives below ourselves. If earth persuades not  
 That I owe prayer and praise and love to God,  
 While all I have he gives, will heaven? will hell?  
 No, neither, never.

*Clara.* I think not all with thee.

*Festus.* And how, unless worst ills revive, how live?  
 Shall all defects of mind and fallacies  
 Of feeling be immortalised? All needs,  
 All joys, all sorrows, be again gone through?  
 Shall heaven but be old earth created new?  
 Or earth, tree-like, transplanted into heaven,  
 To flourish by the waters of life; we, still,  
 Within its shade cropping the fruit life-cored?

*Clara.* Not so! Man's nature bodily, soul-wise, both,  
 Shall be changed throughout, exalted, glorified;  
 And all shall be alike, like God; and all  
 Unlike each other, and themselves. The earth  
 Shall vanish from the thoughts of those she bore,  
 As have the idols of the olden time  
 From men's hearts of the present. All delight

And all desire shall be with heavenly things,  
And the new nature God bestowed on man.

*Festus.* Then man shall be no more man ; but an angel.

*Clara.* Have I not heard thee hint of spirit friends,  
Other than him thou spakest of now ?

*Festus.* Thou hast heard.

*Clara.* Where are they now ?

*Festus.* Ah close, mayhap, at hand.!

And since now other miracles lack, observe !

I have a might immortal, and can ken

With angels. Neither sky, nor night, nor earth,

Hinders me. Through the forms of things I see

Their essences ; and thus, even now, behold—

But where I cannot show to thee—far round,

Nature herself—the whole effect of God.

Mind, matter, motion, heat, time, love, and life,

And death, and immortality—those chief

And first-born giants all are there—all parts,

All limbs of her their mother : she is all.

*Clara.* And what does she ?

*Festus.* Produce : it is her life.

The three I named last, life, death, deathlessness,

Glide in elliptic path round all things made—

For none save God can fill the perfect whole ;

And are but to eternity as is

The horizon to the world. At certain points

Each seems the other ; now the three are one ;

Now, all invisible ; and now, as first,

Moving in measured round. To me there seems

A mocking, flickering likeness in their mien,

To some I know. Not seldom all I see,

Or mix with, seems a fleeting masque prepared

By some obsequious tyrant, bent on fraud ;

Some despot servile to necessity ; who,

For his own ends, plants before our inward eyes,

The eternal phantom of the universe,

And bids us call it real.

*Clara.* How look these beings ?

*Festus.* Ah ! Life looks gaily and gloomily in turns ;

With a brow chequered like the sward, by leaves,

Between which the light glints ; and she, careless wears

A wreath of flowers ; part faded and part fresh.

And death is beautiful ; and sad ; and still.

She seems too happy ; happier far than life—

In but one feeling, apathy : and on

Her chill white brow frosts bright a braid of snow.

*Clara.* And immortality ?

*Festus.* She looks alone ;

As though she would not know her sisterhood.

And on her brow a diadem of fire,

Matched by the conflagration of her eye,  
 Outflaming even that eye which in my sleep  
 Beams close upon me till it bursts from sheer  
 O'erstrainedness of sight, burns.

*Clara.* What do they?

*Festus.* Each strives to win me to herself.

*Clara.*

How?

*Festus.*

Death

Opens her sweet white arms and whispers, peace!  
 Come say thy sorrows in this bosom! This  
 Will never close against thee; and my heart,  
 Though cold, cannot be colder much than man's.  
 Come! All this soon must end; and soon the world  
 Shall perish leaf by leaf, and land by land;  
 Flower by flower; flood by flood; and hill  
 By hill away. Oh! come, come! Let us die.

*Clara.* Say that thou wilt not die!

*Festus.* Nay, I love death.

But Immortality, with finger spired,  
 Points to a distant, giant world—and says  
 There, there is my home. Live along with me!

*Clara.* Canst see that world?

*Festus.* Just—a huge shadowy shape;  
 It looks a disembodied orb; the ghost  
 Of some great sphere which God hath stricken dead.  
 Or like a world which God hath thought—not made.

*Clara.* Follow her, Festus! Does she speak again?

*Festus.* She never speaks but once: and now, in scorn,  
 Points to this dim, dwarfed, misbegotten sphere.

*Clara.* Why let her pass?

*Festus.* That is the great world-question.  
 Life would not part with me; and from her brow  
 Tearing her wreath of passion flowers, she flung it  
 Around my neck, and dared me struggle then.  
 I never could destroy a flower; and none  
 But fairest hands like thine grace even with me  
 The culling of a rose. And Life, sweet Life,  
 Vowed she would crop the world for me, and lay it  
 Herself before my feet even as a flower.  
 And when I felt that flower contained thyself,  
 One drop within its nectary kept for me,  
 I lost all count of those strange sisters three,  
 And where they be I know not. But I see  
 One who is more to me.

*Clara.* I know not how  
 Thou hast this power and knowledge; I but hope  
 It comes from good hands, be it not thine own  
 Force, simply of mind.

*Festus.* Consider man's employ  
 So many years, and his few minutes' thought

On heaven, and own 'tis less even, what we do,  
Than what we think, that fits us for the future.

*Clara.* I would we had a little world to ourselves  
With none but we two on it.

*Festus.* And if God  
Gave us a star, what could we do with it  
But what we can, without it? Wish it not.

*Clara.* I'll not wish then for stars; but I could love  
Some peaceful spot where we might dwell unknown:  
Where home-born joys might nestle round our hearts  
As swallows 'neath our roofs, and rustic peace,  
With blessings of the lowly, innocent aims,  
And kindest neighbour charities, blend their sweets,  
As dewy tangled flowerets midst one bed,  
In pure and unimpassioned life.

*Festus.* A cot  
I know, rose-roofed, by myrtle masked, with porch  
Twixt vine and honeysuckle embowered; near by,  
A rill, heath-braided, crowned with flowering fern,  
Repeats the silvery tattle of the hills  
To rocks, less garrulous, maybe; pleasance, grove,  
Silent, while song-birds sleep, with pensive gloom,  
With florid gaiety, each in turn lure. There,  
Summer's wild roselet scents the unthoughtful step  
That stills its pleading fragrance; see, the head  
Pardoning, peeps up, unharmed. The comforting hum  
Of bees is always audible; allwhere seen  
Fruit sweetly egering, that not cloy. There, backed  
By every sunset, ocean, in his heart,  
Changeful, but charming aye, heaven's glories now  
Liberally redoubles; now conceals in's breast,  
Rivallous and agitated. There, friendliest morn  
Wakes you through latticed jasmin; eve, retiring,  
Breathes of dew-beaded eglantine; and night  
Her luminous forces, starwise, oft deploys,  
To unveil, for sage,—so much as sage to unveil  
May list, the fates premonitory of men.

*Clara.* That spot thou knowest?

*Festus.* Oh yes, my feet could find it,  
Eyes had I none. Sometime, when leisure calls,  
In virtue's vacancies, we will search it out.

*Clara.* Sometime may never come. But look! Day  
dies  
Surely, of too much beauty, which becomes  
In its intensity holy; and we fear.  
See how yon cloudlet climbs the welkin, lone,  
Like lambling strayed from some gold-fleeced flock  
Low folded by the sun; now, dimmer grown  
Upon the æry mountain's side, and now,  
High in the infinite heavens, it disappears,

Saint-like updrawn to God's invisible breast,  
Wherein is rest for all things ; thunder, there,  
Nor the blue flashing levin, dread seraphim  
And cherubim of storms, complain no more ;  
But hushed to silence, and their eyes, tearblind,  
Crushed to his fatherly bosom who now bids forth  
The elements, now recalls them, sleep in peace.  
Peace, how divine ; peace love I more than love.

*Festus.* The sweetest joy, the wildest woe is love.  
Earth's taints, the odours of the skies are in't.  
Would man were aught but that he seems, the mean  
Of all extremes. Brute's death, the deathlessness  
Of fiend or angel better shows than all  
The doubtful prospects of our painted dust.  
And all morality can teach is, bear ;  
And all religion can inspire is, hope.

*Clara.* It is enough. Fruition of the fruit  
Of the great tree of life, is not for earth.  
Stars are its fruit, its lightest leaf is life.  
The heart hath many a sorrow beside love,  
Yea, many as are the veins which visit it.  
The love of aught on earth is not its chief,  
Nor should be.

*Festus.* True ; inclusive of them all  
There is the one main sorrow, life : for what  
Can spirit, dis severed from the great one, God,  
Feel but a grievous longing to rejoin  
Its infinite, its author, and its end ?

*Clara.* And yet is life a thing to be beloved,  
And honoured holily, and bravely borne.  
A man's life may be all ease, and his death  
By some dark chance unthought of agony ;  
Or, life may be all suffering, and decease  
A flower-like sleep ; or both be full of woe ;  
Or each comparatively painless. Heaven  
Blame not for inequalities like these,  
They may be justified ; how canst thou know ?  
They may be only seeming ; canst thou judge ?  
They may be done away with utterly  
By loving, knowing, fearing God the truth.  
Nor should love's self be grievous ; but so blent  
With the world's dues, life's future, nature's claims,  
As it is, all woes their dolorous kinship prove  
With it. Nor deem then aught ill remediless.  
In all distress of spirit, grief of heart,  
In bodily agony, or in mental woe,  
Rebuffs and vain assumptions of the world,  
Or the poor spite of weak and wicked souls,  
Joy even in thine own anguish. Suffering  
Assimilates thee to him, not less than good.

Think upon what thou shalt be. Think on God.  
 Then ask thyself what is the world? What time?  
 And all their mountainous inequalities? What?  
 Are not all equal as dust atomies strewn  
 On heaven's bright concave?

*Festus.* What is, thou hast not  
 Power to persuade me of?

*Clara.* I now go. Farewell!  
 For the night darkens fast, and the dew is falling.  
 Remember what thou saidst about the stars.

*Festus.* Oh, yes. I oftentimes think of them and thee  
 Together.

*Clara.* True?

*Festus.* Star of my life art thou.

*Clara.* Another night, and thou wilt tell me more  
 Of wonders thou canst see?

*Festus.* Ay, thou shalt view  
 Thyself celestial marvels.

*Clara.* Nay, I dread.  
 But hap me weal or woe, I am thine.

*Festus.* Farewell!

*Clara.* Grant me but heaven, that I this soul incline,  
 Though mine go void of joy, to thy good ends.

## VII.

A man in love sees wonders naturally.  
 Ours sole,—abnormal gifts but gradual given,  
 Can make participable his starry views,  
 And intuitions spiritual instilled,  
 May be, by angel kind of other worlds.  
 An ominous parable told by his love, endured,  
 Heart-faltering, he his constancy asserts:  
 Still, who can thought control? Who shun one wish,  
 That, like a stranger in the street, we meet  
 But can't aside from, dreamwise, haunts us;—see;  
 The first leaf falls of heart's bloom. Discontent  
 With nature, strong desire, implanted how?  
 Springs up to know all life, the secrets learn  
 Of science and time's truths arcane; projects  
 Evil would fulfil, that thus forebusied, soul,  
 All virtue of self-ascription to its Lord  
 Might lose. The heart, doubt-torn, disposed to death;  
 End, if e'er written within Fate's book, erased.

*Lawn and Parterre—Bridge; and Village  
 Church in distance. Evening.*

FESTUS and CLARA.

*Festus.* My soul's orb darkens, as a sudden star  
 Which, heaven and earth of wonder emptied, wanes;  
 Passes for aye; eclipsed not; self-consumed:

All but a cloudy vapour, dimming there,  
 The spot in space it once illumed. To myself  
 Once seemed I as a mount of light; but now  
 A pit of night. I dare no more of this.  
 For, like a shipwrecked stranger in a lighthouse,  
 I have looked down upon the utter side  
 Of such thoughts, from the leeming room of reason,  
 And beheld all beyond black roaring madness.  
 Meanwhile, have done with this or that; between  
 This angel incomplete, and finished fiend,  
 Choose I must. Say, I have chosen. What, if still,  
 As earth through all her polar midnight feels  
 The o'erbearing strain which warps her sunwards, I  
 That know I may not rid me of; the sense  
 Of late success, disastrous, to be gained  
 At price of present happiness. It is done.  
 I am due but to mine end. The world itself  
 Shall reconcile to virtue, ere I part  
 Unsatiated of the world. Fate! ask not, sole,  
 One sacrifice, this heart faithful to me,  
 Nearer which ought to be each hour; but, asked,  
 The incommunicant future yields no sign,  
 More than the silvery mirror of the sea  
 Mist-veiled, all imagery, of hers; nor more,  
 Though sought with prayers, foretells me heaven through  
 those

Lights and perfections of our nature, God  
 Hath shrined in us. It is by events we live.  
 Come nearer to me, Clara. Where hast been  
 This long, long hour?

*Clara.* I have been but here, hard by;  
 Planting these flowerets by the brook, that they,  
 Not of felicitous feeling void, their own,  
 Or other's beauties might, reflective, note  
 In the swift sparkling wave; and odorous gifts  
 Uncustomary, exchange.

*Festus.* Ah happy flowers!  
 When shall I know such calm? But I have vowed  
 To be joyous in myself. I will be. See!  
 Here have I lain all day in this green nook,  
 Shaded by larch and hornbeam, ash and yew,  
 A living well and runnel at my feet;  
 And wild flowers dancing to some delicate air:  
 An urn-topped column, and its ivy wreath,  
 Skirting my sight, as thus I lie and look  
 Upon the blue unchanging sacred skies;  
 And thou too, gentle Clara by my side,  
 With lightsome brow and beaming eye, and bright,  
 Long glorious locks which drop upon thy cheek  
 Like gold-hued cloudflakes on the rosy morn.

Oh when the heart is full of sweets to o'erflowing,  
And ringing to the music of its love,  
Who not an angel, nor a hypocrite,  
Could speak or think of happier states ?

*Clara.*

In truth

I know not ; but a sadness that to me  
Feels mortally prophetic, charged with threats  
Of severance, coldness, fears of possible death,  
Change in the faith maybe of one of us,  
And suchlike sad contingencies, weighs down  
At times, my heart much ; sadlier more than all  
Life's promises seem to lighten or lift.

*Festus.*

Away

With baleful thoughts ; let joyaunce be our life.  
Well art thou Clara hight, for soul more bright,  
More lovely, lives not out of Paradise.

*Clara.* I have another name whose element  
Is tears, they tell me. In the coming time,  
Who knows ? it may become me more than this.

*Festus.* 'Gainst that sad augury set thou my resolve ;  
And be it fordone for ever.

*Clara.*

Fate will prove.

But oh ! I dread estrangement, dread to dream ;  
Lest even dreams should wrong thee, and thou act  
As in time's great betrothals, legends tell,  
Man brake his vows, and nature's holy heart.  
For I have heard how once in the head of days  
Man lived with nature as his sacred bride,  
In union pure and perfect. All her wealth,  
Which God had dowered her with, from the rich gems  
Which starred her sandals, and so lit her path,  
To the predominant virtues of the spheres,  
And latent life of elements, she to him,  
For that her lord was poor though potent, gave.  
He too with ampler thought and vital truths,  
Strewn in divine disorder like the stars  
Which to the ignorant mean nought, but to the eye  
Instructed, oft configure boundless good ;  
With deep conceit of mysteries, than all rocks  
Fire-grained, sea-couched, elder, and stories fraught  
With wisdom, in eternal fable penned ;  
Aught worthy knowing was right early known ;  
So sanctified her spirit, that she became  
Like a created goddess. Her he taught  
The life in life of faith, and what on earth  
Was powerfulest of things, the bended knee,  
Which can prevail o'er God ; and how, all years,  
For one clear hour, earth hath the option now  
To rest and ruin all things, but renew  
Her maiden splendour and primæval bliss ;

Or, bearing fate, like chance of equal meed  
 Secure the starry skies. These mark her thread,  
 Amid the hush of heaven, their thronging spheres,  
 And her light footsteps lauding, breathless wait  
 Her choice in charmed silence ; she sweeps on.  
 Such holy confidence hath earth in heaven,  
 Her surety, that though favourite nay elect  
 Herself, now, all shall ultimately be blessed.  
 Thus intimate with time's deep things and high  
 They reigned, like regal angels. To his kin  
 All powers and pleasures he promulged ; and rites,  
 Omen and augury hallowing, rayed round shrines  
 Where gods might worship ; and beyond this, fed  
 His soul on secret wisdom, as on fasts  
 The spirit thriveth. These espoused, inspired  
 With their own harmonised perfections, lived  
 Long while in bliss and honour, each content  
 With faith-life, mythic, vast ; all arts to them,  
 All science ancillary. But ah ! in fine,  
 And in the heel of time which treads us down,  
 There came a change. The wrong was surely man's ;  
 For nature fails not ; but how none hath shown.  
 Whether a too approving smile misled,  
 Dim her ascent but brilliant in her fall,  
 Some emulative handmaid ; and what first  
 Seemed zeal to serve grew rivalry to please ;  
 Or fair confederates, faultless till they fell,  
 Made strength vaunt of his failure ; this we know ;  
 Imperfect wearied of perfection sole.  
 So he, the keystone loosed of loyalty,  
 Lapsed from his liege love, warps his heart from her,  
 Beauteous and bounteous as a sovereign saint ;  
 And to a thousand lax and painted arts,  
 Of barren glitter and unholy wiles,  
 Like sultan flaunting through his gay hareem,  
 Flowered with the carnal beauties of all climes,  
 Vows the idolatrous homage of his lips.  
 His home he left, and leaving, lost his rights  
 (Yer nature's secret treasures ; for in belief  
 Walking no more ; nor with the miracles  
 Himself of old, divine magician, wrought,  
 Faith instigating, and storied in the stars,  
 Earth's holy primer, versant ; he, in art's  
 Sensuous conceits, or idol imagery,  
 Lewd solace seeks ; or else with science, guide  
 Guideless, self-nominated, through life's wide maze  
 Roams with no saving clue. Keys all in vain,  
 He forges ; locks he forces ; nought is there.  
 In vain conjures the elements ; these are born  
 Of nature's household, and are sworn to her ;

No mysteries, now, soul-thrilling, prodigies all  
 Repressed or ridiculed, faith made thrall to fact,  
 And life, well nigh sabbatic wholly, once,  
 With scarce one hour left of a holy day.  
 His tongue hath lost the simple spell of truth.  
 Neither believing nor believed, he roams,  
 Peaceless and powerless, round his forfeit realm,  
 Free, though as outcast. Yea, till he redeem  
 His troth to nature, she who was his queen,  
 Ere consort. and at her immaculate feet,  
 Whiter than moonlit water, shall lay down  
 For aye his falsehoods, brave through penitence, rest,  
 Nor holy home, shall ever again be man's.

*Festus.* Neither was nature perfect, as I thought.

*Clara.* Oh, is it possible thou hast never known  
 How both derived their fates? Wilt hear?

*Festus.*

Proceed.

*Clara.* Yon sun, just set, all seeing, all beseen,  
 Filling the sacred seven and urns of fire,  
 Had, time unlimited, lived debarred of life  
 Soul-hallowed; when our God, his kind intent  
 Now agefully matured, all things prepared,  
 Incorporated its spirit, and for mate  
 Made him the lucid moon, now rolling round  
 His disk immense, at fatal distance doomed.  
 O Sun, O Moon, king of the skies and queen;  
 Hero and heroine of the universe, ye;  
 Lovers divine, daughter and son of God,  
 How shall a feeble, humble tongue like mine  
 Your fall sublime, sad but illustrious lapse,  
 To mortal mind convey? Free were they both  
 To roam the skies; or, if forbidden aught  
 Were named in heaven's infinitude, so vast  
 Their spatial liberty, no laws they knew.  
 But written within the book divine of fate  
 One law there was. For ages unconceived,  
 They nothing knew but light unshadowed, life,  
 Love, liberty, all unhaunted, undeformed  
 By one divisive moment, or mere fear;  
 Till, in the plains celestial wandering once,  
 And heaven till then no happier orbs embraced,  
 A radiant path as though by feet of gods  
 Trodden, star-littered, as earth with golden seed  
 Autumnal, on the gleaner's yellow road,  
 They neared; and where it brightly branched in twain,  
 One listless moment separated.

*Festus.*

Alas!

Thenceforth one sole tradition streaks time's stream,  
 From the dumb ages of the passed, to truth's  
 Eternal future. Ah yes, I see the sun

Unguarded, now betrayed, incarcerate, bound,  
 Blinded, insulted, mocked, to incessant toil  
 Doomed, wageless; bound; now, ready to be slain  
 In bonds on heaven's high hill; yea, see him at last,  
 Smote by the star-bear's wide and wintry wound,  
 To yearly death, set 'neath the snake-wreathed pole,  
 Hiding in Hadean tomb, his disrayed crown.  
 Tales though traditionary, still hopeless not.  
 For again I see him majestic and serene,  
 Though suffering from the unkindly detriment  
 Which earthly nature treacherous him hath wrought.  
 He quits the ærial desert; lifts his head  
 Glad, like wrecked swimmer, shorewards, and salutes,  
 As with a kiss of fire our hallowed earth,  
 The threshold of his old abode the heavens.  
 Once more in heaven, the reascendent light  
 Beams from the burning cross which marks his course  
 Triumphant over lessening night; once more  
 The lord of nature lifts his conquering brow  
 As though from death eterne.

*Clara.* These lovers twain  
 For a space though separated, I said, full soon  
 Their spherul courses recombining, came  
 To the vast portal of a luminous fane  
 Guarded by living forms of shapes unknown,  
 But void within. A vacant throne was all  
 The dome sublime contained; upon whose steps  
 A star-scaled serpent slumbered. Roused——

*Festus.* No more!

If only as some cloud-giant hurled from heaven,  
 And vapouring as he falls, thy words to me  
 Seem threatful of time future, and my mind  
 Give sensible unease. Peace will lastly come,  
 Howe'er disseverance loving souls may grieve.  
 The wise well know true union is in heaven,  
 And there alone.

*Clara.* It may be.

*Festus.* Types of truth,  
 These pressed upon creation through all spheres  
 Material, mental, by God's hand and seal:  
 Truths which time's ear for ages hears with awe  
 Servile, nor knows their meaning; as earth stunned  
 With thunders, said, of gods; till some sage earns  
 Heaven's humble secret; and from man's freed mind  
 The fiery fiction fades. Think thou no more  
 On ill-houred apologue or of man or star.  
 Hear rather thou what glads me to have seen  
 Trance-wise, a bright miraculous mystery  
 Of God; a vision worth all sequels lost  
 Of love estranged. The great reunion hear:

The divine marriage of the moon and sun.  
 The sun was flaming high in heaven ; the moon  
 Mighty though mild, and all the saintly stars  
 Beaming at once in grandeur and grave joy.  
 'Twas the world's All-Sire gave the bride. The Hours,  
 Companions of her course, forewrit on high,  
 And all its sevenfold Sanctities, virgin peers,  
 Were her immortal bridemaids ; and strewed  
 On her white way, by many a mansion lamped  
 With festive radiance, astral wreath, and robe,  
 Girdle, and palm-branch,—palm, sole tree that greens  
 Both heaven and earth, to where in dayless time,  
 Degreeless space, her absolute home, prepared  
 Nigh to the infinite, stood. Struck loud their lyres  
 Of light, the angels ; and to the feet of those  
 Divine ones bowed them, as to spirit and soul  
 Conjoined, of things celestial ; with acclaim  
 Ecstatic, far off hailing each and crying,  
 Welcome thou lord, thou bride of light ; all joy  
 In everlasting being be yours ; and all  
 The universal blesser, God, can give.  
 Choicest of all the chosen, thy love is more  
 To the soul delicious than, to scent, the rose,  
 Purer than is the lily or is the light.  
 Lord of the dawn, thee now the wearied world  
 Awaits ; earth's eyes with watching for this day  
 Fail. The bread's broken and the wine is poured,  
 And all the guests are gathered, from the bounds  
 Of heaven's imperial horizon, to this,  
 Our bright palatial centre. All things serve  
 The hallowing rite, which nature owns with God.  
 And so they became one. In golden he,  
 In silver car came she, down the blue skies.  
 But on return they clomb the clouds in one ;  
 And vanished in their snow. The marriage feast  
 Was held, throughout the intelligible world,  
 An universal holiday ; all now 'lumed  
 With light than sunlight softer, than the moon's,  
 Mightier and more intense ; nor since have ceased  
 The great congratulations. Peace and love  
 Pervade the perfect state, and all is bliss.  
*Clara.* True prophet mayst thou be. But list ; that  
 sound  
 The passing-bell the spirit should solemnise ;  
 For, while on its emancipate path, the soul  
 Still waves its upward wings, and we still hear  
 The warning sound, it is known, we well may pray.  
*Festus.* But pray for whom ?  
*Clara.* It means not. Pray for all.  
 Pray for the good man's soul

He is leaving earth for heaven,  
And it soothes us to feel that the best  
May be forgiven.

*Festus.* Pray for the sinful soul;  
It fleeth, we know not where;  
But wherever it be let us hope;  
For God is there.

*Clara.* Pray for the rich man's soul;  
Not all be unjust, nor vain;  
The wise he consoled; and he saved  
The poor from pain.

*Festus.* Pray for the poor man's soul;  
The death of this life of ours  
He hath shook from his feet; he is one  
Of the heavenly powers.  
Pray for the old man's soul;  
He hath laboured long; through life  
It was battle or march. He hath ceased,  
Serene, from strife.

*Clara.* Pray for the infant's soul;  
With its spirit crown unsoiled,  
He hath won, without war, a realm;  
Gained all, nor toiled.

*Festus.* Pray for the struggling soul;  
The mists of the straits of death  
Clear off; in some bright star-isle  
It anchoreth.  
Pray for the soul assured;  
Though it wrought in a gloomy mine,  
Yet the gems it earned were its own  
That soul's divine.

*Clara.* Pray for the simple soul;  
For it loved, and therein was wise;  
Though itself knew not, but with heaven  
Confused the skies.

*Festus.* Pray for the sage's soul;  
'Neath his welkin wide of mind  
Lay the central thought of God,  
Thought undefined.  
Pray for the souls of all  
To our God that all may be,  
With forgiveness crowned, and joy  
Eternally.

*Clara.* Hush! for the bell hath ceased;  
And the spirit's fate is sealed;  
To the angels known; to man  
Best unrevealed.

*Festus.* Stay; what wouldst say, yet? Something,  
surely, sad  
Darkens thy mind's disk. Speak it.

*Clara.* Nay, not sad.  
Some other time.

*Festus.* Why now, love.

*Clara.* Well then thus.  
These vast unearthly powers thou hast, thou saidst  
I should myself for once partake. Let me  
Assure mine own heart they be innocent.  
Refused, I judge them evil; if harmless they,  
Thou wilt permit me share, or view, the means.  
This ask I therefore, not from vain desire  
Of prying into mysteries, nor as test  
Of words of thine; for thee believe I truly:  
But as a proof of love and harmlessness,  
To view with these same marvelling eyes of mine,  
The sensible form of some obedient sprite,  
Or invocable angel. Wilt thou?

*Festus.* Ay.  
Wouldst parley Luniel on her silvery seat,  
Or the star-tiared Ourania? for the night  
Deepens in heaven; and even now I see  
Earth's cardinal world-watchers, each prepare  
His wing to poise for paradisal flight,  
Relieved by darker angel.

*Clara.* None of these.  
Behold yon star just trembling into light.  
Hath it a tutelar spirit?

*Festus.* Yea, every star.

*Clara.* Prepare thy spell then. I would see its form;  
And hear its voice.

*Festus.* Weird charm nor spell I use;  
Nor incantation. My sole magic, might.  
Mine only sign, this; this my spirit ring.  
Prayer, faith, and a pure heart can draw down heaven.  
Most surely then one star. Kneel thou with me.

Spirit of yon star, that now  
Peer'st through God's all-clothing sky,  
List, we need thee here below;  
Leave thy mystic light on high.  
By the all-compelling name,  
Thought alone, but uttered never;  
Word in heaven and earth the same,  
Come thou now, and come thou ever.

*Clara.* I feel a light, a voiceable power.

*Festus.* Arise!  
What wilt thou of't?

*Clara.* Nought. Let it speak.

*Festus.* Attend.

*Star Spirit.* Man's vital frame of the elements is ta'en;  
And when by sacred energy of mind,  
He nature's robe can thread by thread unwind,

Till death's proved nothingness, show sunwise plain  
 Life's allness; heaven's true science then ye gain;  
 Learn how God yearns all souls in bliss to bind;  
 How, too, through heaven and angels, stars and earth,  
 He, All-Sire, bounteous, wise as just, through light,  
 Light natural and intelligible which springs  
 From Deity, both, eternal outflowings,  
 Spread through the universe of death and birth,  
 Sweet surety of immortal essence brings  
 To spirit advised of reason infinite,  
 And ultimate content of all living things.  
 For as even all mere existence hath due worth,  
 End justified by God, who caused to be;  
 So, knit together by wisest amity,  
 Plant, planet, star, gem, life instinctive, life  
 Angelic; all, man's soul, by like decree,  
 Teach, each through noble or virtuous quality,  
 The whole with order, goodness, happiness rife,  
 His being and progress through eternity.  
 Know mortal, then, that with or gem or flower,  
 Love's glance, or earth-lent ray of farthest star,  
 To such as, faith-led, seek in doubt's dark hour  
 Truth, holiest influences may be, yea are;  
 And gracious interchange of special power.

*Clara.* Star-spirit, it is so.

*Star Spirit.*

Who his soul-path knows  
 To the one universal Spirit, and rightly seeks  
 How long or sore soe'er his struggles, falls,  
 Relapses, shall, by penitent labour nerved,  
 And in spirit refreshed by heavenly counsels brought  
 By the angel of the day, who gives to God  
 His hourly record of men's deeds, at last,  
 Soul-perfectness enjoy; his life's long course,  
 With all best purposes strengthened,—as a stream  
 Sea-bound, that with a thousand rills empowered  
 No meet recipient save the main knows; summed  
 In the eternal Good.

*Festus.*

So be it with all.

*Clara.* Oh I have gazed on spiritual beauty, known  
 Till now, by none.

*Festus.*

Let both rejoice in truths  
 We may hold, loyally, supreme. As when  
 Before some mighty suzerain, crowned of God,  
 A vassal sultan, tribute to discharge,  
 Or homage yield, kneels, resolutely content;  
 Nations kneel with him, and in his prostrate brow,  
 A people of pride kiss dust; so I, with all  
 Truth-lovers, though a half-tribe scarce of man,  
 And dizzied yet with soul-light, Spirit, to thee.  
 Thy starry name?

*Star Spirit.* Pneumaster.

*Clara.*

Where dost dwell ?

*Star Spirit.* I in my star abide, yet oft in heaven.

Not where the ante-formal seraphs beam,  
Nor cherubim with countenance winged ; who round  
Heaven circling, as with whirlwind wings of light,  
A holy and living throne for the Spirit, form,  
All-hallowing ; but where sainted souls attain,  
Heroical ; chanting now, God's mercy thrice  
Victorious o'er all worlds sin-treasoned, sworn  
To evil and vanity ; who the mysteries now  
Of wisdom hymn, the holy inspiring light  
Which Deity sows in nature and in stars,  
Sows, reaps, and in men's souls replants, blessed heirs  
Of either world, above beloved, below  
Accepted ; now, with guardian spirits of spheres,  
Angelical and elect, mixed, I, too, serve ;  
All orders of each other impenetrant, now ;  
For, by the fall of Lucifer, pride's no more,  
If e'er in heaven ; in heaven, as now on earth,  
Humility, highest of all virtues, known.  
I thus at thy behest, immortal, come  
To obey a mortal's will, thine own, whose sleep  
The angels guard, with dreams bestarred, of heaven ;  
Dreams that oft check, with suspensory charm,  
The wing of wandering heavenly ; dreams I ask  
To inspire, then, on mine own bright ray return.

*Clara.* Holy and lovely sprite, be thou with God.

*Star Spirit.* Cherished of heaven, earth's choicest souls,  
farewell !

*Clara.* Farewell, too, thou.

*Festus.*

Adieu, sweet soul ; may night,

Earth's healing shadow, from her sphere-bright form  
Unfolded virtuously, thy soul release  
From all ill, all defect ; that so through dreams  
Thou mayst in spiritual Edens taste the joys  
Anticipative, thou hopest, and feel the sense  
Of heavenly patterned powers, whereof day owns  
But a mean, blenched, copy. Go ; I do commend thee  
To all good angels, maiden ; and if so much  
I love thee, yet I dare not as I would.  
For all the heart most longs for, most deserves,  
Passes the soonest and most utterly.  
The moral of the world's great fable, life.  
All we enjoy seems given but to deceive,  
Or, may be, undeceive us ; and when done  
The sum and proved, why work it over again ?  
They are gone, the heavenly and the earthly. I,  
As a lone column, cold in sunshine, stands  
Projecting darkness only,—around me cast

Soul-saddening shadows. What, indeed, is life,  
 This life-world, Lord ! wherein thou hast founded me,  
 But a bright wheel which burns itself away,  
 Benighting even night with its grim limbs  
 When it hath done and fainted into darkness ?  
 For say we are promised life immortal, how  
 Even then shall we exist ? Hath soul a soul  
 Grosser without, and spiritual fine within ?  
 Are grades in deathlessness, and bounds which mark  
 From existence essence, as in our bodily frame  
 Flesh seems but fiction, for it flies away ;  
 While this, the gaunt and ghastly thing we bear  
 In us, and hate, and fear to look upon  
 Is truth ;—in death's dark likeness limned, truth sole ?  
 Both perishable, impermanent both. No more !  
 Dark, wretched thoughts, like ice-isles in a stream,  
 Choke up my mind, and clash ; and to no end.  
 In spite of all we suffer and do enjoy,  
 All we believe we know, and deem we have proved,  
 There comes this question, over and over again ;  
 Driven into the brain as a pile is driven ;  
 What shall become of us hereafter ? What  
 Is't we shall do ? how live ; how feel ; how be ?  
 For granting us not perfect here, nor ill  
 Wholly, shall soul be moveless after death ?  
 Or shall't be all one dread remembrance crushed  
 Into a being, unfutured save of woe ?  
 And so conserved by burning memory, poured  
 In on the mind, that saving we would lose ;  
 Life's pettinesses, futilities, trivial cares,  
 That, like the lava-floods which choked of yore  
 The city Cyclopæan, brimming up,  
 As with torrent brass its mighty mould, our own  
 Annoy we perpetuate ? And shall the passed  
 Thus ruinously perfected e'er remain ;  
 Our grandest moiety of being, our soul's  
 Capacities for more good and greater power,  
 Than life allows, unused ? Or ends death all,  
 With his spiteful trick ? Like snow which lies  
 Down wreathed round the lips of some black pit,  
 Thoughts, which obscure the truth, accumulate ;  
 Which solve it, in it lose themselves. There's no  
 True knowledge till descent ; nor then, till after.  
 What shall make visible truth as 'tis in God ?  
 We glimpse the light through medium dense or clear,  
 As reason rarifies, and yet so distort  
 That through the smoky glass of sense, the sun  
 All-blessing, scarce would know himself. So with truth.  
*Lucifer.* Life is the one great truth ; the fiction, death.  
 Art never satisfied ? Must thou still, and aye,

Revel in bootless questings?

*Festus.* Lo, I speak  
To heaven, and earth makes bold to answer me.  
It is better, too, than silence. What, if stars  
Invoking, earth now, in forbiddance stern,  
Rumbles her caverned threatenings at my feet!  
Or midnight clouds low muttering in long lines  
Uncomprehended thunders, stun mine ear?  
Call'st thou this power?

*Lucifer.* Yon pretty little star  
Shines, methinks, on a vasty falsehood. Power  
Thou hast o'er finite agencies, but none,  
I tell thee, over the infinite. Confess  
Therefore unjust presumption, and receive  
Obediently meet means. What wouldst thou do?

*Festus.* I sicken of this mean and shadowy nature  
And shallow life.

*Lucifer.* Well; is death deep enough?

*Festus.* Life uneternal's nought. All life's in God.  
My heart's blood is in ebb. Not rarely I think,  
The sameness 'tis, and tameness of the times,  
Prostrates my spirit. I want an upward change.  
What do they in the asteroids? What in the orb,  
Whose months are years of earth? But more, I'd see  
The roots of Hanokh, earth's metropolis  
Cain built in Nodland; see the fanes and tombs  
Of buried states; cities of wicked gods,  
Clouded with profane incense, now 'neath sea,  
Whelmed, and washed out.

*Lucifer.* Be it as thou wilt. In time  
Thou shalt know many a mystery.

*Festus.* This I know;  
I have been told, and taught, and trained to pray.  
I pray, and have no answer: may, as well  
Wrestle with the wind. I feel as might a cloud,  
Which, on the golden threshold of the skies,  
Fearing to rise, and fainting, men suspect  
As a spy of night; when it had but to soar,  
And with its excellent beauty ravish earth.

*Lucifer.* There's reason now and then in similes.  
Souls are like clouds, born of the infinite stock  
Of ever formless essence, and their race  
In bounteous beauty run, or ruinous storm;  
Objects of love and gladness, or of ill,  
And wrong and wrath, as nature predicates;  
Which, having blessed or blasted in their life,  
Die, and rejoin the universe, to rise  
Like emanant dew on earth, in future forms  
Of retributive nature; she herself  
Being, and doing, and enduring, all.

*Festus.* This life is as a question, to which comes  
No audible answer, save an echo.

*Lucifer.* Hark !

*Festus.* Where thou art all is dumb. I would repent.  
What shall be done to expiate offence ?

*Lucifer.* Well, sacrifice a butterfly to the wind.  
As soon expect thy life's flood-tide to rise  
Out of death's baseless depths, depths yet by me  
Unplumbed, as look to be wise and innocent, both.  
Heart up ! If virtue loses, wisdom wins.  
And evil and good, like the light's rays traversed  
By bandlets black, or chequered chart of old  
Sun dedicate, show originally immixed.

*Festus.* Good to extract from evil were not hard ;  
Ill transmute into good, were science, cross  
And crown. Such would I mine.

*Lucifer.* It is not in man.  
Set clouds on fire ; go sow the sea with sand ;  
Then reap your crop of foam, and harvest it.

*Festus.* The time shall come when every evil thing  
From being and remembrance both shall die ;  
The world one solid temple of pure good.

*Lucifer.* Never, while thou art conscious of thyself.  
Never till from that shining sheaf of days,  
Behind him, God the annihilator shall pluck  
Earth's death-day, and his wrath burns white for aye.

*Festus.* Let all the earth be lightning, the dark blue  
Of ever-stretching space substantial fire ;  
Still God is good ; still tends o'er those he loves.

*Lucifer.* Why therefore comes no answer to thy prayer ?

*Festus.* It may be silence is the voice of God.

*Lucifer.* Assent, or dissent ; whether of the twain ?

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## VIII.

Comes on a quarrel stormy and stern, if brief,  
 'Tween the two foe friends, this demanding what  
 Cannot be ;—who immunity shall secure  
 'Gainst self-sought evil ?—that, safe grants withholding,  
 And easily made : their taunts recriminative  
 Resultless ; even as when some summer eve,  
 Two emulous youths, from dull scholastic toil  
 Set free by holy night, looser of bonds,  
 Rush, bounding, to the main, slumbering hard by,  
 With latent light inly aflame ; and quick  
 Implunged, rise gameful, glittering like star-gods ;  
 Lean, arrogant, on the lightning wave ; launch, each  
 'Gainst other, liquid meteors, thunderless ;  
 The foam, handsmote, in showerlets, arch-wise, falls,  
 Flashing about them ;—neither gains. So part  
 Our disputants, these in earnest : the attack  
 To come resolved on secretly, by one,  
 Through sadd'at inconstancy.

*A wide open Heath, by the Sea. . Evening.*

*FESTUS and LUCIFER meeting.*

*Festus.* God hath refused me : wilt thou do it for me ?  
 Or shall I end with both ; remake myself ?

*Lucifer.* Now that is the one thing which I cannot do.  
 Am I not open with thee ? Why choose that ?

*Festus.* Because I will it. Thou art bound to obey.

*Lucifer.* The world bears marks of mine obedience.  
 Well, 'tis a judgment doubtless. Heaven is just ;  
 And justly asking faith of all that all,  
 Ill even, served ultimately his own wise ends,  
 He all disposing, I rebel ; and now,  
 In my turn, asking nothing but belief  
 Unfaltering in oneself, say,—I foresee  
 Thou wilt bring to an end the whole, ere well begun.

*Festus.* My heart, like an insurgent king, no more  
 Brooks the accustomed tribute.

*Lucifer.* Well ; I waive it.

*Festus.* Off ! I am torn to pieces. Let me try,  
 And gather up myself into a man,  
 As once I was. I cannot live, and live  
 In endless doubt. The day hath lost its charm,  
 The night its holy beauty, when from heart,  
 Even if not whole with God, faith fled, hope fails  
 Of better things.

*Lucifer.* Oh, an' thou lovest a creed,  
 Be pessimist ; nihilist, if thou wilt. There are  
 Who deify the devil in their own hearts,  
 In dreams of everlasting nothingness.

*Festus.* Be what I may, I have done with thee. Dost hear?

*Lucifer.* Thou canst not mean this?

*Festus.* Once for all, I do.

*Lucifer.* It is men who are deceivers, not the devil.  
The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat  
Oneself. All sin is easy after that.

*Festus.* I feel that we must part; part, now or never:  
And I had rather, of the two, 'twere now.

*Lucifer.* This is my last walk through my favourite  
world;  
And I had hoped to have enjoyed it with thee.  
For thee I quitted hell; for thee my soul  
Shrivelled and warped into a man; for thee  
Shed I my shining wings; for thee, this mask  
Of flesh put on, and seeming shape like thine;  
This moveless mockery of mere motion brooked;  
And now by my woe I swear that were I once  
For thy false heart to give my spirit spring,  
I would scatter soul and body both to hell;  
And let one burn the other.

*Festus.* If thou darest  
Lift but the finger of a thought of ill  
Against me, and—thou durst not, mark, we part.

*Lucifer.* Well; as thou wilt. Remember soon thy  
heart  
Will shed its pleasures as thine eye its tears,  
And both leave loathsome furrows.

*Festus.* Thinkest thou  
I will have no pleasures without thee, vain friend,  
Who marrest all thou mak'st, and even more?

*Lucifer.* Thou canst not; save indeed some poor trite  
thing,  
Called moderation, everyone can have.  
And modesty, heaven knows, is suffering.

*Festus.* Now will I prove thee liar, for that word:  
And that the very vastest out of hell.  
With perfect condemnation I abjure  
My soul; my nature doth abhor itself,  
For giving thee one moment's right to touch me.  
Hence! let me pass. I have a soul to spare.

*Lucifer.* A hundred, I. He is gone; though but for a  
time.  
He braves me, he! even as on cave-rent coast,  
Hard driven by hurricane blast, the mounting tide  
Like a white wild beast, chased, flashes into its den;  
The assault turns; heads the attack; the slackening flood  
Overtakes, and raging, quells for a moment;—soon  
The sea, inveterate victor, smoothens all;  
Torrent, cave, crag, who knows strife was? Meanwhile,

I have him yet; for he is mine to tempt.  
Beside the greed of power and rage to know  
All knowable, there's much magic in life's waste  
On abstruse studies that can benefit none;  
Ignoring wilfully, so, men's proper end  
Of mutual good. Of such I know, and may,  
Him stimulating with somewhat of all lures,  
Perchance, in time, take due avail. It may be,  
Gold hath the hue of hell flames; but for him  
I will lay some brilliant and delicious lure,  
Shall be worth perdition to a seraph. Only  
Consider beauty's argument, how it tells;  
Her eye's close reasoning smile; delicious proof,  
Her fingers' clasp; her lips' soft summing up;  
The delicate peroration of her sigh;  
Scarce audible; visible rather, oh! I know.  
And if he love not now, while woman is  
All bosom to the young, when shall he love?  
Who ever paused on passion's fiery wheel?  
Who by the side of her he loved, whose touch,  
Lightest, brings rapture, trembling, e'er stopped short  
His eloquent speech, coldly to count his pulse?  
The car comes, and they lie, and let it come,  
Triumphant. See it crushes, kills, what then?  
It holds their god, their idol, so, they die,  
Doubtless, of joy. And he! he looks not one  
Enough shall fool: but sick of skill in foils  
He flings away, risks never less than life.  
Nay, let him look, methinks, on aught which casts  
The shadow of even a royal joy, he'd dare  
Embrace a bride of fire. Such love is. Arms!  
To arms, so, beauty, they be thine. For love,  
Like nature, is war; sweet, sensible war. And now  
Pleasure, shall any part thee from my use?  
Let wring God's lightnings from the grasp of God.  
But who his tactics blabs? Or I an end  
More summary might forefix. One beauty may  
Be played against other; and faith, once uncaged,  
Whistles with oh! such sweetness, from the bough.  
Most men glide quietly and deeply down.  
Some, hell's abysses seek, like cataracts;  
And passion it is which plunges fierceliest men  
Into mine arms, as find they will, who will.  
But it matters not; hell burns before them all.  
It is by hell-light, which through their life's thick fog  
Glares red and round; which gone, would leave to grope  
In utter dark, these heirs of heaven, they shine  
To each other; and their chiefest deeds achieve.

## IX.

Meanwhile, as nought  
 Had passed, we see them presently, meet. Who knows  
 How 'tis we reconcile ourselves to evil?  
 But in this bird's-eye view of earth, and track  
 Of dust stirred through all nations, note we whilst  
 His friend malevolent triumphs by control  
 Of superficial miracles, compassing  
 With him, as day and night, together, earth,  
 Man, shown all forms and fanes of faith as vain  
 Alike, in God's esteem, knows, in truth's light  
 Her total season, sunlike, blossoming here,  
 Here ripening, God his secret will, well-pleased,  
 Sees gradually mature; domes old or new  
 Misdedicate, or mean, with his presence filled,  
 To himself, the all-shrined One reserves; until,  
 In all earth's living tabernacles, each land  
 Him worship, God, the untempled, whom all creeds  
 Concelebrate.

*Earth's Surface--An Hour's Ride.*

## LUCIFER and FESTUS.

*Lucifer.* Wilt ride?

*Festus.* I'll have an hour's ride.

*Lucifer.* Be mine the steeds; be me the guide.

I something know of almost every land,  
 Their features, products, legends. Understand  
 My lot has been to know men's sagest teachers;  
 Their prophets, patriots; and, go to!—their preachers.  
 Apart from any prejudice, let me add,  
 They are, most of them, indifferently bad.

*Festus.* Quick! I'll not question what you say.

*Lucifer.* It's odd I never make a call  
 But it's—Long looked for, after all!

*Festus.* Come, call your hacks.

*Lucifer.* Oh, they'll not stay.

It may not be with me as some;  
 What I invoke is pretty safe to come.  
 Come hither, come hither, my brave black steed;  
 And thou too, his fellow, hither with speed;  
 Though not so fleet as the steeds of death,  
 Your feet are as sure; ye have longer breath;  
 Ye have drawn the world without wind or bait,  
 Six thousand years, and it waxeth late;  
 So take me this once, and again to my home;  
 And rest ye, and feast ye.

*Festus.* They come, they come.

Tossing their manes like  
 Pitchy or snowy surge; and lashing

Their tails into a tempest ; their eyes flashing  
Like shooting thunderbolts.

*Lucifer.* So ! know your masters, colts.  
Choose.

*Festus.* The white one.

*Lucifer.* Be it so,  
Mourning suits me best, we know.  
Up and away.

*Festus.* Hurrah ! hurrah !  
The noblest pace the world e'er saw.  
I swear by heaven, we'll beat the sun,  
In the longest heat that ever was run,  
If we keep it up, as we've begun.

*Lucifer.* I told thee my steeds were a gallant pair.

*Festus.* And they were not thine, they might be divine.

*Lucifer.* Thine is named Ruin, and Darkness mine.

*Festus.* Like all of thy deeds, now, that's unfair.

*Lucifer.* A civiller and gentler beast  
Than thine, thou hast never crossed, at least.  
Now, look around.

*Festus.* Why, this is France !  
Nature is here like a living romance.  
Look at its vines, and streams, and skies ;  
Its glancing feet, and dancing eyes.

*Lucifer.* Well worth no doubt a second glance.  
But now, one glimpse with me, from Alp to main !  
See its wide glebe, with rooted seas of grain  
Billowing ; its cities bowered mid fruit-groves, here,  
Such as by Adour, or Dordogne, a life  
Flowerful all years enjoy ; there, heights cave crowned,  
Where lordly savage, long ere time could count  
How many his fingers, or his horn-book knew,  
Warful 'gainst the elements, pampered babe and mate,  
On the pink silvered pith of fawnling's limbs,  
And marrow of all he slew ; and there, his life's  
Last chase achieved, to the end superb, his neck  
With rough red amber gorgeous, greatly died.

*Festus.* Now, Europe's head, all others scorning ;  
Model of states, now ; then, their warning ;  
Strangest of nations, light yet strong,  
Fierce of heart, and blithe of tongue,  
Prone to change, so fond of blood,  
She wounds herself to quaff her own,  
Shows, aye, a brave, bright, lovely land ;  
And well deserving every good  
Which others wish themselves alone ;  
Could she but herself command.

*Lucifer.* On, on, no more delay  
Or we'll not ride round the world, all day.

*Festus.* Good horse get off the ground.

*Lucifer.* Sit firm ; and if our coursers please  
We'll take at once the Pyrenees.  
'Twas bravely leapt.

*Festus.* Ay, this is Spain ;  
Europe's last land twill e'er remain.  
Last in the progress of the earth  
To moral light, and liberty ;  
In all things last, to prove how bigotry  
Can waste all wealth, and banish worth.  
Studded with many a gloomy shrine  
What is't men worship here, I pray ?

*Lucifer.* This fane, once Moslem, Christian now ,  
Refuses obstinately to say.

*Festus.* But mean not men to one, the same, divine,  
However rites may vary, e'er to bow ?

*Lucifer.* Away, nor loiter now for pictured art,  
(Or natural scene by miracle consecrate  
Or patriot war, mock chivalry or true ;

*Festus.* Not where the rivulets flow of life, and death,  
Nor Tayo's wave gold-footed ? Not even to spy  
The Iberian vault, where, sire of swords, Tubal  
Abode, first ; great Alcides, after, famed  
For magic, marvels necromantic, wealth  
Untold, unhallowed ?

*Lucifer.* Not an instant. Come !  
Turn thy steed, and slacken rein ;  
Quick, we must be back again ;  
O'er the vale hid in the mountain ;  
O'er the merry forest fountain ;  
Ruin and Darkness, we must fly  
(Ver crag and rift, swift, swift, swift  
As the glance of an eye.

*Festus.* See here is Italy, the grave  
Of freedom slaughtered once ; who now  
Accomplishing her prophet's vow,  
In resurrection from the dead  
Uplifts her pure and graceful head,  
Content to keep her wise and brave.

*Lucifer.* Oh, yes ; and here where Alp and Alp Pen-  
nine  
Force, snowy-tented, heaven : shall many a hill,  
His head with olive wreathed, and his foot bathed  
In fat of flour, and milk, ring loud with joy,  
(Ver superstition's end.

*Festus.* Be not so sad,  
Since worse may happen, even here ; where Tiber, stream  
Cloud-born, of empire, rolls ; and that, the Hun,  
God's scourge, lies confined under ; may so sleep  
One time, all evil beneath love's covering flood !

*Lucifer.* And there lies Greece, whose soul, men say,  
hath fled.

*Festus.* Some god perhaps may come and raise the dead.  
For birthplace once of gods;—such, ancient Time,  
Lord of the golden age; and he, self-styled,  
Monarch of space, and all celestial orbs,  
Heaven, fount of light; such Zeus the All-living One  
Hight Saviour; such the Titan sage and good,  
Who upon Caucasus suffered; birth-place, too,  
Of something more than gods, philosophy;  
Art, science, polity; what yet thence may come,  
Who knows?

*Lucifer.* Not I. Time nips us.

*Festus.* Athens, home  
Of heroes, and of gods Olympus, not  
To stay our steps, one instant; not to see  
Parnassus, heaven of bards, nor Delphi?

*Lucifer.* No!  
What hours have we to waste on gods, or, worse  
By one degree,—on bards? let heroes be.  
Not he of hyperborean fame who earth  
Rounded, on golden arrow, white winged, was like  
To sleep more on his path. But see, the isles;  
The starry islet wandering with the wind  
Once, rooted now, the cradle of twins divine;  
The Rhodian, sovereign of the sacred sea;  
God-nursing isles, isles god-entombing; graves  
Of demigods who made believe to die.

*Festus.* Legends like these, once pleased.

*Lucifer.* But now,  
Through yonder dark and winding rift,  
Pass we, where Mounts Kropakhian lift,  
Each one, his lightning-scarred, but dauntless brow;  
Hard by the sensitive fount, whose wave obeys,  
With an obsequious volume, the moon's wane,  
Or increment; and that funereal spur  
Of night-hued marble, that round beglooms the air.  
Lo! there the unpeaceful Euxine, womb and tomb  
By turns, of many nations; nor far off  
Twin cities, keys of empire, mark, blood-dyed,  
Matched but by Troy of host devouring fame.  
The pool Mæotic here, worshipped as god  
By Scythian, and the Amazon, militant dame,  
Jealous of the archer breast.

*Festus.* Away! away!  
From Pesth to Worms seems but a trot. This day  
I feel the gad.

*Lucifer.* But first, a double, I pray.  
Norward, a time, we'll hold our course,  
Thine I think is the bolder horse,

But bear him up with a harder hand ;  
Rough riding this o'er Swisserland.

*Festus.* So all have found it, who have tried ;  
High as their Alps the people's pride,  
Never to have bowed before  
The tyrant, or the conqueror.  
One glance.

*Lucifer.* Oh two I'd have thee take.

*Festus.* 'Tis Leman ; freedom's sacred lake  
Whose shores by genius hallowed, stand  
Its Eden, and its holy land.

*Lucifer.* Away, away ; before thee lie  
The fields and floods of Germany ;  
From legendary Rhine, whose bed's  
The crypt of goblin gold ; hills bare,  
The Demon Shadow seems to stride ;  
Demon indeed, a man self magnified ;—  
Hills, forested to their crown ; and where,  
By virgins' bones and magians' heads,  
'Gainst harm forefended, who would dare  
Attempt it, even of fiendish foes ?  
To steep Schaffhausen's seething snows,  
That know not, more than time, repose,—  
To founts Danubian, and their fall  
Through the Iron Gates, behold it all !

*Festus.* Well I love thee, fatherland ;  
Sire of Europe as thou art ;  
Be free, and crouch no more, but stand ;  
Thy noblest son will take thy part.  
Oh sooner let the mountains bend  
Beneath the clouds, when tempests lower,  
Than nations stoop their sky-compeering heads  
In homage to some petty despot's power.  
The worm which suffers mincing into parts  
May sprout forth heads and tails but grows no hearts.

*Lucifer.* There lies Austria, famous land  
For fiddlesticks and sword-in-hand.

*Festus.* And Poland whom truly unhappy we call ;  
Unable to stand, unwilling to fall,  
Forge into swords thy feudal chain ;  
Smite even the souls of foes in twain ;  
The shackles have been bound in vain  
Round England's arms, and we are free,  
As the souls of our sires in heaven which be.  
That earth should have so few  
Men, fathers ! like to you !

*Lucifer.* What matter who be free, or slaves ?  
For all there is one tyranny, the grave's ;—  
Or freedom, may be. On, on, haste !

*Festus.* What land is yonder wide, white, waste ?

*Lucifer.* Ha ! 'tis Russia's gentle realm ;

Whose sceptre is the sword, whose crown the helm.  
 Wouldst know the difference 'twixt the bond and free?  
 'Tis that these will, those will not, liberty.

*Festus.* Truly, though strange it sound to some,  
 All government's by rule of thumb.

*Lucifer.* Thou seest, mid air, that darling little cloud?  
 To us, I think, 'twill be allowed  
 To pass beyond, above, that we may spy  
 Rightly, the things which round us lie;—  
 From Zemlia, and the sistering islets seven,  
 And Thulé ultimate hiding-place of man,  
 By the hill Altaic, named, in the age of mounds,  
 The Almighty God, by Tchudic tribelets, now  
 In the book of nations known no more; there, still,  
 Higher than lark soars, cloudlet scuds, it stands;  
 To Volga, holy Boug, and warlike Don;  
 Divine Alborz, the sacred mountain, site  
 Of the Promethean agony, where he spilled  
 His blood, who, a god, the end of gods foretold;  
 And Caspian, 'neath whose shallowing wavelets hides  
 God's Eden.

*Festus.* O rich in secrets!

*Lucifer.* See, where towers  
 Baghavan upon whose brow the holy flame  
 Incessant burns to Aurmazda, lord of light.

*Festus.* I swear by every atom that exists  
 I better love this reckless ride  
 O'er hill and forest, lake and river wide,  
 O'er sunlit plain and through the mountain mists,  
 Than aught thou hast given to me beside.

*Lucifer.* Kerman's sands, salt-white, swept by torrid  
 wind,  
 Plague-breath'd, there, see; which, roused the desert dust,  
 Blinds man's bright eye, and mummifies his frame.  
 There oft, in arid dell, the cool suhrab  
 Calm mockery of sweet waters, overhung  
 With green and succulent shrubs, you seem to hear  
 The ripple of the waves, delusive lurks;  
 Shamo and Koom and Kobi, Heraut; and Balkh,  
 Mother of cities, murally encrowned,  
 Mourning mid endless ruins, but hiding yet  
 His marble throne, milkwhite, who of mortals king  
 First reigned:—shall we seek, and fit it for the last?  
 Now from our Mount of prospect to descend,  
 Our gryphon flight 'twere better here to end,  
 And solid earth reseek. Bear, downwards, friend.

*Festus.* Look, my way I can only read  
 By the sparks from the hoof of my giant steed.

*Lucifer.* There, by the gilded roof, which from afar,  
 Gleams o'er the desert like an earth-propped star,

Observe Thibetian L'hasa, temple seat  
 Of an incarnate Deity, where still  
 Mix Shamans and the Lama's lieges ; those  
 Urging the stars, and with sublime deceit  
 Announcing fate ; these, with machine-made prayers,  
 Their transmigrative God, who immanent aye  
 In your humanity leaps from frame to frame,  
 Deathless, nor ever fails.

*Festus.* Still eastwards, ho !

See what a long, long track  
 Of dust and fire behind ;  
 For leagues and leagues aback ;  
 And shrill and strong, as we shoot along,  
 Whistles and whirrs, like a forest of firs  
 Falling, the cold north wind.

*Lucifer.* Where art thou now ?

*Festus.* In Tartar land ;

I know by the deserts of salt and sand.  
 Nor aim nor end hath the wandering life,  
 Rest reaps but rest, and strife but strife ;  
 With the nations round they ne'er have mixed,  
 For good or for ill, they stand all still,  
 Their bodies but rove. their minds are fixed.

*Lucifer.* Miss not the chance, Manswara's lake !  
 The sight alone, some pilgrims say,  
 Immortally blessed the soul will make.  
 There, feast thine eyes with it, and away !

*Festus.* Father of fables, much I fear  
 Thy creed more liberal than sincere.

*Lucifer.* Pray fancy not what I repeat  
 I have any faith in ; men will cheat  
 Their souls with legends in all ages ;  
 And I,—I'm only eighth of all the sages.  
 Start not, we are on earth's roof ridge here,  
 The watershed of nations, old Pamir.  
 Courage, we need not fall. There, Kokonoor,  
 Sea subterranean, once, of wandering fame ;  
 Here Baikal, holy lake, of mountain meres  
 Vastest ; and those twin pools, named eyes of heaven ;  
 Shelinga, there !

*Festus.* Ancestral seat, first home  
 (Of perfected humanity, ice-chill now,  
 But glowing once with the heart-heat of new earth !  
 Haunt of the young immortal's golden years,  
 Ere nations boasted names, base wile ; 'twas here  
 The primal people of angel seed outlined  
 All human knowledge, taught with difference fine  
 Tongues of diverse roots ; wise, themselves, and free,  
 While culturing earth they characterized the skies ;  
 Their veritable divinity penned in signs

Celestial ; and in heaven's constellate lights  
One natural creed eternized.

*Lucifer.*

So ?

*Festus.*

Are these

The hills sepulchral talked of, sodden with blood  
Of slaughtered henchman, slave or steed ; far round  
Earth heaves with tomblets, as the sea with waves ;  
These old, old wilds Kathayan ; graves as yet  
By art or avarice unprofaned, where lie  
Kings fameless, of unstoried states, entombed,  
Forgot, together ?

*Lucifer.*

These ! And there, not far,

Lo ! mounds even mightier, where two summer days,  
The shepherd sheik, as a lion of the sands  
Lean, keen, brown-maned, shall mark both herd and flock  
Content, depasture ; underfoot, the Khan,—  
God's shadow ; brother, may be, of the moon ;  
Sole refuge of a wretched world, the whiles  
He plundered, and to those who asked, gave bread,—  
Sceptred, and swathed within his leaf-gold shroud,  
Sleeps, doubtless, sound ; though o'er that sacred head  
Shrill sings the boor ; who, striding round the base,  
In meditative measurement, and round,  
Twirls his long lance, contemptuous of the time  
He lives in ; which but likes great things, not makes.

*Festus.* And yonder see old China's wall !

Where gods of gold men's minds enthrall ;  
Gods whose gold's their only worth.

*Lucifer.* Well, is not gold the god of earth ?

*Festus.* Whate'er, meseems, men's gifts ; their clime,  
Their race, their ends, their lore, their time ;  
Round earth one universal instinct reigns ;  
Hear allwhere talked of, gods ; see allwhere fanes.

*Lucifer.* True ; here men worship mighty Brahma ;  
there,

Pure Buddh alone is named in prayer ;  
And yonder, nought save heaven ;  
Far round, Islam hath conqueror been ;  
And Moses, and the holy Nazarene,  
O'er half the world hath driven.

*Festus.* I doubt not ; each of variant rite,  
But all concerned with the Infinite ;  
The one, the sole ; in whose kind hand  
Lie all things by him formed or planned,  
All orbs, all souls ; to none denied,  
Save hearts of prejudice and pride,  
Grace, whereby each is sanctified.  
O'er all the world one faith I deem,  
Howe'er unlike the expression be,  
In type, tradition, liturgie,  
The life immortal, God supreme.

*Lucifer.* True ; and to such conclusions come,  
One might almost have stayed at home.

*Festus.* A moment breathe we. Every land,  
Beside the sacred trivialities  
Which most the unthinking millions please,  
Hath its own sanctity.

*Lucifer.* Oh, I understand.

*Festus.* Here Konfutsé, pure sovereign sage, who realm  
By realm, truth-seeking, knew but, named but God,  
The great one, ere all nature, ere all law ;  
The eternal reason that had arched the heavens ;  
The universal essence ; here Meng-tse  
Superbly taught all acts,—the human soul  
Not self-condemned by inborn pravity,  
To ever-deepening sin,—essays towards good,  
As water aye its level seeks ; here, son  
Of truth, self-styled but truthless, Lao, preached  
Of deathly souls, and pleasure's quest, life's end ;  
And, head of earthly immortals, held that God,  
From whom the world, as life from light, in death  
His gift supreme, eternal life, resumes.

*Lucifer.* But now for time's sake, let us rise  
A thought superior, towards the skies ;  
We have but to reach a certain height,  
And everything appears in sight.  
See there ; one instant cast thine eye  
Where, on the world's edge, isle-crowds lie ;  
Massed nebulous ; great, small, rich in gold, spice, gems ;  
From far Nippon, where, shrined, the bull of light  
Butts first, with fiery horn, the egg mundane ;  
And Miako's gilded idol, hugest he  
Of hand-wrought gods, sits placid, to the isle  
Earth's equatorial scores as with a sword,  
Midstwise, Sumatra, hundred-citied ; seats  
Palatial boasting built by gods ; to that  
Immensest isle, gold-grounded, whose least rill  
Outbids Pactolus ; where the tameless tribes  
Witch-queened, who the boomerang hurl, dwell ; and, food-  
pined,  
Do mess on their own blood, disseised of sense ;  
And Tonboro, neighbour dread to the Khersonnese  
Aureate, there lying like some rich reprobate,  
With ashes strewn by stern and dominant priest,  
Ere absolutive of sin : which seen, and cooled  
Our horses' feet in freshening clouds, away !

*Festus.* Lo ! southwards, hey for Hindustan ;  
The sun beats down both beast and man ;  
Herb, insect, tree, for life do gasp ;  
The river reeks, and faints the asp,  
But blithe are we, and our steeds, I trow,

And the mane of mine yet bears the snow

Which fell on us, by Caucasus.

By the four beasts, but this is warm.

*Lucifer.* Away, away, nor stint nor stay,  
We'll reach the sea before yon storm.

*Festus.* Wilt take the sea?

*Lucifer.* Ay, that will we  
And swim as we ride our steeds astride;  
Come leap, leap off with me.

*Festus.* What! from this steep, a mile above the sea?

*Lucifer.* Check not thy steed one pace, but passing  
glimpse

Dhawalageri's pinnacle, earth's supreme,  
Kailas, Merou, celestial mounts, mid-sky  
Dazzling their divine denizens; Ganges, dropped,  
Tradition true, from Siva's solar eye;  
And Chandra-bagha, holy to the moon;  
But not for these, nor where earth's loftiest leap  
Of waters lights the forest gloom, stay we  
Our horse-flight: nay, nor for the Edenic isle,  
And peak, where foot of Buddh, the last of gods,  
Or Adam's first of men, impressed, the land  
Hallows to pilgrims desperate, of all creeds.

*Festus.* There is a rapture in the headlong leap,  
The wedge-like cleaving of the closing deep,  
A feeling full of hardihood and of power,  
With which we court the waters that devour.  
Oh! 'tis a feeling great, sublime, supreme,  
Like the ecstatic influence of a dream,  
To speed one's way, thus, o'er the sliding plain,  
And make a kindred being with the main.

*Lucifer.* By Chaos, this is gallant sport,  
A league at every breath;  
Methinks if I ever should have to die,  
I'll ride this rate to death.

*Festus.* Away, away upon the whitening tide,  
Like lover hastening to embrace his bride,  
We hurry faster than the foam we ride;  
Dashing aside the waves which round us cling,  
With strength like that which lifts an eagle's wing  
Where the stars dazzle and the angels sing.

*Lucifer.* We scatter the spray, and break through the  
billows,  
As the wind makes way through the leaves of willows.

*Festus.* In vain they urge their armies to the fight;  
Their surge-crests crumble 'neath our strokes of might.  
We meet, fear not, we mount; now rise, now fall;  
And dare with full-nerved arm the rage of all.  
Through anger-swollen wave, or sparkling spray,  
Nothing it recks; we hold our perilous way

Right onward till we feel the whirling brain  
 Ring with the maddening music of the main ;  
 Till the fixed eyeball strives and strains to ken,  
 Yet loathes to see the shore and haunts of men ;  
 And the blood half starting through each ridgy vein  
 In the unwieldy hand, sets, black with pain.  
 Then let the tempest cloud on cloud come spread,  
 And tear the stormy terrors of his head ;  
 Let the wild sea-bird wheel around my brow,  
 And shriek, and swoop, and flap her wing, as now ;  
 It gladdens. On, ye boisterous billows, roll ;  
 And keep my body, ye have ta'en my soul.  
 Thou element, the type which God hath given  
 For eyes and hearts too earthy, of his heaven ;  
 Were heaven a mockery never I would mourn  
 While o'er thy billows I might still be borne ;  
 While yet to me the power and joy were given  
 To fling my breast on thine and mingle earth with heaven.

*Lucifer.* 'Twas always one of my profoundest wishes,  
 The sea to study, and consider fishes.  
 And now that, well ; behold us come ;  
 Nor e'er before could I the time  
 Spare to such end, though so sublime  
 Let us explore the great aquarium.  
 Soon shall we see the denizens of the deep  
 Dart by us ; shapes primæval claimed by gods  
 Vishnu, and mixed Oannes ; ork, and whale,  
 The oceanic beast, whose jaws like hell's gates once  
 Yawned to ingulph the recreant prophet, cast  
 By crew forefated in the ravening deep ;  
 Sea-horse and seal, old ocean's flocks ; and all  
 That flout the whirlpool, down whose swirling maw  
 Voracious of all life, the shrieking ship  
 Plungeth ; bright dolphin, lover of the lyre,  
 For more than one sublime adventure starred ;  
 And, dubious those, behold, whom air and sea  
 Alternate please, now fly with fins, and now  
 With wings swim ; lords of richest wrecks be these ;  
 All who, or lonely and deathful, haunt the deeps ;  
 All that by coast, by firth, in endless shoal,  
 Vanwise, or rear, heave shoreward ; all who glide  
 Through streets of submerged cities, weed-draped, thronged  
 With waves, where, once, as in sumptuous Valipûr,  
 Fluctuated the courtier crowd ; through magic Ys ;  
 By its silver flood-gates lost ; or gilded marts  
 Of Vinborg, greed-fouled,—spitefully content,  
 Nor wink their cold white eye ; clang may the bells  
 Still pendulous in those tide-swept towers, as though  
 In calm, for prayer ; storm-clashed, for victory ; they  
 Reck not, nor death-peal heed ; through marble grove

Of pillars, once impalaced, as through copse  
 Of coralline branchery, they their wavy way  
 Fan flexuously ; uncharmed, unhindered, fan.

*Festus.* Land ! this the island supplement  
 To Africa's great continent ?

*Lucifer.* Not here, not here, nor yet we land ;  
 Though grateful doubtless were the strand  
 Where, nature's alms, we might the traveller's tree  
 Meet, in whose veins condensed the essential dew  
 Flows fontal ; while its flowerets, lamp-like, light  
 To its restful tent of leaves, the wayfarer.  
 One minute more. We quit the main ;  
 We make the shore. Here's land again ;  
 The Cape ! now scour o'er Afric's plain,  
 From the head of storms, and lion by the sea  
 High couchant ; and God's table, draped with clouds ;  
 By stream Kaffrarian, endless called, and that  
 Rock-brinked, which through Mataman, townless land,  
 Rolls ; where, too, flourishes first and best of things,—  
 So by Damaras deemed,—the all-fructuous tree  
 From whose far-shadowing limb-wood, human fruit  
 Ripe, deathless dropped ; where, half by gumwoods girt,  
 And palm, barbarian Quorra steals ; there, men  
 In ivory, gold, blood, trade ; nor, far remote,  
 Who the divine child, babe eterne, adore ;  
 Unconscious Deity ; haste we, haste we, on.

*Festus.* Away, away, on either hand,  
 Nor town nor tower, nor shade nor shower,  
 Nothing save sun and sand.

*Lucifer.* But here, see many a treeful tract with wood  
 Well seasoned, as to feed the final fires ;  
 Here, there, a naked realmlet, centred round  
 Some vast baobab, like aged with ocean's tides ;  
 Within whose cavernous and sepulchral trunk,  
 Meet village senates, lawing peace, war, now,  
 To dusky clans ; now, in its templed bole,  
 The idol gods adoring of the land ;  
 Arboreal fane ; some dragon-blooded tree,  
 Like-yearred with the cloud-bow, or one eve, one morn,  
 Than the stars younger ; ranged wherewith the stock  
 That, willowy, waves above the ruined wreck  
 Of Babylon, or even that, nigh Memphian well,  
 Rifted yet vital, 'neath whose honoured boughs  
 Paused once the sainted pair, who, angel-warned,  
 Bare in their bosom o'er Zin's isthmian sands,  
 An unweaned child-god, but a sapling seems  
 Of yesterday.

*Festus.* What are these hills we have just  
 O'ervaulted ?

*Lucifer.* These, Lupata, spine o' the world

Kumara, there, the emerald mount ; and there,  
 See, there they are, I knew right soon  
 We'd light on the Mountains of the Moon.  
 Over them, over ; nought forbids.

*Festus.* Yonder the Nile and the Pyramids ?

*Lucifer.* Nay, we can't stay to search them. Rise,  
 good steeds ;

Let us enjoy another earthscape. See  
 Louquosor, Medina Thabou ; all that rests  
 Of hundred-palaced Thebes, where, shrineless, dwelt  
 One who supreme, the unknown, the invisible reigned  
 'Midst many idolatrous, o'er one tribe devout,  
 Godwise ; and long ere cometary earth  
 The stars disturbed, with presages of woe  
 To heaven's great family, in herself to be  
 Concentrate, and accomplished to the death,  
 As in a fiery vortex, himself named  
 To worshipping worlds, as here, the imageless,  
 The infinite, the eternal. There, behold,  
 O'er the Erythræan gulf dyed red with blood  
 Of Pharaoh's hosts, the free, wide sandy wastes  
 Of kingless Arabie ; Mecca, seat of power  
 Prophetic, and the city of the tomb,  
 By angels haunted.

*Festus.* And thy sacred well,  
 Seem I to recognise from storying pens,  
 Divine Zemzem, from founts celestial strained  
 Through astral strata, and the musky loam  
 Of Paradise ; whence moonbrowed maids of light,  
 Fearless, their life-cups fill with bliss.

*Lucifer.* And there,  
 El Kodsh, and substitutive mosque, rock-based,  
 Upon whose crest, intempled now, shall stand  
 The archangel stern, when he, by judgment trump  
 All souls shall summon ; and with fate-fraught rod  
 Inevitable, call forth what Hades holds.  
 Here, well-walled Joppa, towered before the flood ;  
 There, Tyre, where once Astarte, round the earth  
 Pacing, moonlike, a star picked up, new fallen,  
 Which she, at her own altar, stretching out  
 Her sceptral cross, to herself hallowed. There,  
 Once, Olybama rose ; there, CEnosh ; home  
 Of the giant race, earth dominating, sites now  
 Sightless to all save eyes endowed like thine.  
 Here, Byblos, Orchœ there ; Bab-El, God's gate,  
 Where hides mayhap 'neath thunder-thwarted pile,  
 With archives of mid earth's initial throne,  
 The foreworld's infant speech ; here Nin-èvech,  
 There Arach, Arkite city of the moon ;  
 Whose golden-crownèd shades shall all precede

Kingly, at doom ; through Persaradæ's graves,  
 Roman, and Russ, and Norman's castled tomb  
 Yield up their tyrannous ghosts ; his even who yet  
 In sepulchre secrete still lies ; and once,  
 Mid alabastrine halls, approached through forms  
 Cherubic, of ubiquitous wing, now, see,  
 In unearthed sculpture, leagues a thousand hence,  
 Divining 'fore his gods, with wine ; or, now  
 Immingling arrows, mark him draw, perchance,  
 Self-sought, his fiery fate ; and if, more near,  
 Thine eye still keep its edge, that wandering vill,  
 Buildd, men say, in test of faith, times passed,  
 Mid Arab wilds, by great Shedaad, whose walls  
 In tiers alternate towered of silver and gold ;  
 Invisible since to dulled belief. Dost see it ?

*Festus.* Is't now a structural mass, dreamlike out-drawn  
 In vanishing perspective, with pillars winged,  
 Translucent, quivering up like columned air  
 Of resurrective dew, sun-fired ; dim domes,  
 And spacious sanctuaries ? Or, plainer now,  
 Is it like a shadowy palace, rich in rest,  
 The feverous brain of worn-out traveller draws  
 Upon the heatful noon, that as with glimpsæ  
 Of comforting things allures, but while we move  
 Nearer, retreats ?

*Lucifer.* Ah, good ; thou seest it not.  
 Turn, sudden now, and coast this midland sea,  
 By Carthage, Barca, Tripoli ;  
 Crete, there, Jove's grave ; there, Sicily,  
 Isle of the sun, whence Hades' equal bride ;  
 And 'twixt whose templed cliffs and us, that barque,  
 Laden with the sack of Rome, tyrannic queen  
 Of bonded naticns—the tile-gilded roof  
 Of Jove's high capitol ; the seven-starred lamp  
 And golden table of God's own temple, won  
 By Vandal king self-crowned of earth and sea,  
 And their affiliate isles,—storm-sunk, but served,  
 With ivory thrones, and busts marmoreal, gems  
 And jewelled caskets, armlets, torques, and rings,  
 And carquanets impearled, and coffered coin  
 Of conquered states, to startle, or to adorn  
 Sicilian sea-nymphs in their billowy play.  
 By Syrta Cyrenean now we hie,  
 By Atlas range and Barbary ;  
 By the desert heart of slave-land ; waterless sea,  
 Where tide once haply broke tempestuous, now  
 Heaves, ponderous, the slow sand-wave, stormy dust  
 Scattering in poisonous clouds.

*Festus.* Not far I deem  
 The Hesperidean gardens, serpent-watched

Once, watched in vain. The honeyed opiate, there,  
Was quite too much.

*Lucifer.* The land of serpents this ;  
Haunted by adder, cockatrice, those the Moor  
Wreathes round his limbs, or, in his bosom, curled  
Confederate, cades ; those that, by glistening glance,  
Charmed song-birds to their death transfix ; or those  
More fascinate, that oft the innocent breath  
Of babes, suck, viperously, away ; and once,  
By him enormous, on these banks, just cleared,  
Of Bagradas ; who, memorable worm,  
Rome's hosts braved singly ; singly suffered siege ;  
War waged ; till by arblast and by catapult,  
And burning darts, self-firing as they flew,  
Quelled, he at last capitulates with death ;  
His shining slough to swell the conqueror's pomp.

*Festus.* A learned demon past all contradiction.

*Lucifer.* Why, look ; I'm naturally strong in fiction.  
And then it rather piques one to describe  
The triumphs of the serpent tribe ;  
Whether of cobras, god-kinned, thought to have missed  
Their way from heaven ; or crownèd basilisk, type  
Of demon good, and mundane genius ; such  
As round his healthful staff Asclepias twined,  
And saviour named ; or such, perchance, as now  
Mid Cæsarean isle, 'neath mound tower-topped,  
Lies tombed, redoubtable dragon ; be the tale  
Not rather told of ethnic faith, o'erthrown  
By conquering cross.

*Festus.* Their crown is, to have striven.

*Lucifer.* See Mong Mæsoba, Mount of God, first  
marked  
Of Punic mariner, when from seas unkeeled  
Since Argo, or dark diluvian barge, as car  
Of gods he hailed it, once fire-ringed ; of flame,  
Of fume, even, naked now. And now still on !

*Festus.* Hurrah ! by my soul at every bound,  
I feel, I see the earth rush round ;  
I see the mountains slide away,  
That side night, and this side, day.

*Lucifer.* Wilt see the New World ?

*Festus.* Well ; a peep.

*Lucifer.* One dainty run, then ; one more leap  
And lo ! we quit this lion ground,  
Plunging from palmy steep, once more into the deep.

*Festus.* To cross indeed the Atlantic tide,  
And far as southmost Fire-land ride,  
Would I, if time be ours.

*Lucifer.* Oh, plenty ;  
Be there, too, ere we reckon twenty.

*Festus.* The sea again, the swift bright sea !

*Lucifer.* Hold hard ; give rein ; and follow me.  
See there, the Elysian islets, of eld thought  
Home for the heroic blessed, who years divine  
Enjoyed, and life eternal as of heaven ;  
Now, only fortunate deemed, their mountlets crowned  
By that beneficent stem, whose top, with clouds  
Nightly encompassed, soon as morning beams,  
From leaf and ramage sheddeth cool bright showers,  
Freshening the fountless soil ; matron and maid,  
God thanking for his daily boon, with joy  
Brim high their globular gourds from every bough.

*Festus.* It is somewhere hereabouts I count to have  
heard  
Of other happy spots being found.

*Lucifer.* No lack  
Of such demesnes ; the winged isle, to wit,  
Walled high with gold-bright crystal, giant kinged,  
Round the world flying, oft-sighted, good ; but found ?

*Festus.* And Bolotoo, joint paradise of gods  
And men, 'mid ocean isolate, land of shades ;  
Where, to chance wanderer for the future bound,  
And for lost secrets searching, all spent thought  
There hoarded, temple, tower, and grove-clad hill  
Show but forms permeable ; through all he stalks  
As through a solid vision ; wall, cliff, bark,  
Close round him, as over diving gull the main.

*Lucifer.* 'Tis odds we have gone through it, and not  
known.

*Festus.* Look ; listen. There is music in the cave  
Where ocean sleeps, and brightness in the wave  
The sea-bird makes its pillow, and the star,  
Last born of heaven, its azure mirror ; far  
And wide, the pale, fine gleam of sea-fire glows,  
Softly sublime, like lightnings in repose ;  
Till roused anon, afar its flaming spray it throws.

*Lucifer.* Well, now we have travelled above the waves,  
Wilt travel a time beneath ?  
And visit the sea-born in their caves ;  
And look on the rainbow-tinted wreath  
Of weed ; pearl-starred, and gemmed, wherewith  
The mermaid binds her long, green hair ?  
Or rouse the sea-snake from his lair ?  
See where he gambols for us there !

*Festus.* Ay, ay ; down let us dive.

*Lucifer.* Look up ; we lack not stars, I swear ;  
And every star thou seest 's alive ;  
A little globe of life, light, love ;  
Whose every atom is a living being,  
Each into other's bosom seeing ;  
Each enlightening the other.

*Festus.* Oh how unlike man's world above,  
Where mainly, vainly, each must strive  
To dim, or to outshine his brother.  
Would only I were ocean's son,  
The solitary brave,  
Like yon sea-snake,—no end hath he  
To fear because his soul is free,  
No future heaven to crave,  
Whose life's but to sun all his folds upon  
The crest of the highest wave.

*Lucifer.* Yon reptile men call serpent of the sea,  
Eldritch, huge, ocean-churner, hight in Ind,  
In Norland, world circler; whose hoary mane  
And visage, sadly human, reared mast-high,  
Till suddenly down implunged, it disappearing,  
Appals the homebound mariner, as at eve  
Rounding his last of headlands blue, he weens  
In its eye to have hailed some Pharos, newly erect,—  
May be less caitiff than he looks.

*Festus.* Enough  
I have seen of him; some fathoms.

*Lucifer.* Know this soil  
Thou treadst, the continent, once, in ages passed,  
Neptunian, where the sea-god righteous ruled,  
And his sons ten; here, trace the beds of streams  
Foreworldly, such as with voluminous surge  
Atlantis cantoned, and, in main long lost,  
Their tusky spoil disbogued; or, swollen with doom  
Of yearly freshet, scared the rock-scooped booths  
(Of savage tribeslets trembling; there, the bounds  
Mark, once of jealous states war-mad, all stilled  
By watery and necessitous peace, un hoped,  
Unlooked for; here, the isle Triphylian Jove  
Judged from his imminent chair.

*Festus.* And now behold  
Drowned lands and verdurous meadows submarine,  
Where water turtles wander, pasturing free.

*Lucifer.* Come on, come on; the dew, last night  
Was heavy.

*Festus.* Are those spars, so bright,  
Or eyes of things which ne'er forgive  
That seem to play on us, and glare  
With rage, that we so far should dare  
To search the hidden deeps  
Where tide, the moon-slave, sleeps;  
And ork, and kraken, world-forgotten, live?  
Where the wind breathes not, and the wave  
Walks softly, as above a grave;  
Where coral worms, in countless nations,  
Build rocks up from the sea's foundations;

Where the islands strike their roots  
 Far from the old main-land ;  
 And spring like desert fruits,  
 Shook off by God's strong hand,  
 Up from their bed of sand.

*Lucifer.* There; now we stand on the world's end  
 land ;

Over the hills, away we go ;  
 Through fire and snow, and rivers whereto  
 All others are rills.

*Festus.* Through the lands of silver, the lands of gold ;  
 Through lands untrodden, and lands untold ;  
 Lands where his age-long skirmish still maintains  
 The conquering Araucanian ; who from his bounds  
 The pale face waiving aye, still, manly, serves  
 The world's essential Spirit ; and on whose shore  
 The mount of thunder, o'er the orb-wrecking flood  
 Sole buoyant of all things, self-steered, in times  
 Long gone, first grounding, paused ; then ceased, content :  
 Ceased, from its world-wide wanderings ; lands where trined  
 With son and moon eterne, the rainbow, dream  
 Of the elements, was adored. Near by, of old,  
 A marvellous hill towered ; is't, I wonder, now ?  
 That crystal mount, cloud-crested, once which stood  
 In western Tucuman, with acute reply  
 Answering the solar messages of light,  
 As equal, equal ? deep below its base,  
 O'erarched, a river navigable will run.

*Lucifer.* Nay, if 'twas ever here, it is here, this hour.  
 Lo ! Andes, outer wall of earth ; and here  
 Light-wise, in pardonable idolatry,  
 Pure Pachacamac, lord of the universe,  
 By kingly Yngas was adored, and choirs  
 Sun-dedicated, of virgins ; fairer they  
 Than all the flowers their golden gardens grew ;  
 Or silvern shrubs scarce imitative, and gemmed  
 With ruby bud or beryl, could show. And now,  
 Nor mine, nor mountain lake though choked with gold,  
 Like Titicaca, from whose sacred shores  
 Long ages lapsed ; the scions of the sun,  
 Mango Capac and Mama Oëilo, stepped  
 Ancestral, to the sceptre of Berou,—  
 Our course must stay ; nor yet, though nigh, the spot  
 Where that unbearded brood,—whose gnarlèd knees  
 Ranked level with the poll of general men ;  
 Whose even glared like shields rimmed round with brae  
 Where fell their shadow grass nor floweret grew ;  
 At sight of whom men swooned and women died ;—  
 Debarked ; whence God best knoweth, here at foot  
 Of Andes' highest ; but them, his vengeance roused

For vast offence—a fiery falchion quelled ;  
Sudden it swept from heaven, and in one swathe  
Laid all their giant trunks.

*Festus.* What sin was theirs ?

*Lucifer.* The story's quite apocryphal, I admit ;  
'Tis nothing, maybe, but a round, sound, lie ;  
Who told it first, is answerable.

*Festus.* Thou, too.

Words are deeds spoken. Aught we do is writ  
Brief-wise in God's eternal diary.  
All acts seem echoed to the skies. We live  
As in a ball.

*Lucifer.* Meanwhile, be it ours to hie  
Unstayed by aught above earth, or beneath,  
Not even by bass of rivers subterrene,  
Booming through caves, each with his several roar,  
I hear them plain, down to earth's focal fires,  
Still inextinct, and flaming floods ; whence dashed,  
They reascend volcanic, melled with ice,  
Lava, and fishy mud, and so explode  
Vaporous, the solid hills ; by the mount of stars ;  
By Chuquibamba's cone of carmined snow ;  
And Rupurini's demon cliff, dark browed  
With wood self-procreate, must we swiften on,  
To the equatorial groves that mat the shores  
Of Maracaybo, and Maragnon's tide,  
The sea's tide mastering ; Temi, gold-dyed stream,  
And falls of Tequendama ; rent ere yet  
The moon rode, aëry.

*Festus.* Haste we !

*Lucifer.* Nature, here,  
Of life like lavish as the sun of light,  
Leaves all this foodful paradise unbarred,  
Ungated even ; while almost every tree  
Hangs heavy with vital bread, man's simplest board ;  
Or fruit lactifluous, from whose flower-tipped stem,  
High trembling, the earth-gorged Indian, thirstful, drains  
At sundown, creamy draughts ; to all his kin  
Dispensing, patriarchal, bowl on bowl.

*Festus.* Our high road narrows shrewdly, here ;  
A stumble might—

*Lucifer.* Bah ! what a tale !  
Thy pad is surefoot, past all fear ;  
And mine ; well, when shall Darkness fail ?  
But see ; not oft the eye comprises,—  
Not even when quickened to embrace  
A circle wish-wide of pure space,—  
View fairer than upon our vision rises.  
Behold the isle-gemmed western sea ;  
Black Hayti, once the imperial negro's throne ;

Bahamas, and the Virgins, those to lee ;  
And that, of all earth's westlands earliest known.

*Festus.* This road's a trifle rugged.

*Lucifer.*

On !

We have far to prance ere the hour is gone.  
By strait and bay, by swamp and plain  
Through torrent flood ; through hurricane ;  
Have we our pathless course to find.

*Festus.* As quick we ride, on either side,  
Atlantic or Pacific tide,  
Thoughts legendary of spots where hide  
The Aztek's mythic realms, come o'er the mind ;  
Coy Iximaya, and the precipitous gates  
Of that recondite capital, mountain scarped,  
Of sacred dwarf-kings, haply, with all theirs  
To vanish into cloudland, doomed ; thenceforth  
With ghosts, of fabulous crowns, such ghosts as haunt,  
Faseless, the cots of nations, walk for aye.

*Lucifer.* So many rarities will be lost, one day,  
No need to moan for a trinket like a town.  
See here, Copan's, Uxmal's insculptured domes,  
Mysterious, tombed alive in matted woods,  
Buried erect, unruinous : here, the toils  
Combined of royal patriots, and leal crowds,  
All limbs who strained to upbuild, and their throats tore  
To applaud, complete, what now the bat, the snake,  
The wight who hath lost his way, alone know ; there,  
Serf-reared, the fire fanes of Palenque, cross-famed,  
And towers she-eagles nest on imperturbed ;  
Cholula's terraced pyramid, and those vast,  
Mid pathway of the dead, to sun and moon  
Hallowed, o'er minor mounds more mean than stars  
Which rise, supreme ; Subtiaba's palaces ;  
Cities and holds of dynasties unknown ;  
Less glorious, may be, than the soldans named  
By proud Fardusi, paradisaal bard ;  
Less numerous, not ; who natural signs here graven,  
Charged with intensest meaning, now all lost ;  
Wrecked on some rock uncharted in time's flood,  
No ebb shall e'er dismask.

*Festus.*

But little seems

To hinder, or to attract.

*Lucifer.*

Wood, river, lake,

Earth's widest, mightiest, spread around,  
Beset in vain the path we take,  
Intent alone to gain our starting ground.  
Some pools, indeed, we'll pass, ere the hoar woods  
Of growth eternal, continental reach,  
That all enclose,—from florid lands which seas  
Columbian lave, to gold-rocked Labrador ;

From ocean's gilded sands, by Kalamath,  
To silveriest Secklong, we have overswept.

*Festus.* There's a dark cloud of slaves, which mars;—  
But look! it lifts beneath one's eyes,  
The fairest views that round us rise;  
Though nought shall blot the bannered stars,  
From freedom's skies.

*Lucifer.* Here the Aztek's, bowered with floating  
pleasances  
Where sailed the swans of sway symbolic; see,  
There Yutah's lake, where the polygamous crew,—  
Misled by one self-unctioned, not anoint  
Of genius, nor from world-life spiritual, strained;  
Who from the brook, the lines of lacquered lead  
Sham angel forged, dug out; who, after, fell  
Death-shotten, with Cæsar's trickling wounds thrice told;  
Ill doer he, ill done by,—their starred hour  
Dreadless abide, of doom. Here note these hills  
With cedars prediluvian, towerlike, crowned;  
And yon demarking gap, far blazed through woods,  
Where day begins, and east from west divides.

*Festus.* I would yon shining chain of waters, now  
Slave, Athabaskan, down to the Huron, coast.

*Lucifer.* Mark, too, those mightiest rivers, tributaries  
From Firm-land to their Sea-lord; there, not far,  
Ohio broadens; here, gross Missouri duns  
The deepening sire of floods, aye tiding on  
His current deluge to the ingulphing breast  
Of central seas; he, clearing oft his banks  
Of secular secrets, too long kept, strange frames  
Of mammoth shows, or kindred monster; brutes  
Dreadest, whose teeth might nigh with tombstones match;  
Limbed, like an oak; but all swept off by heaven,  
Creation at the flood revising: such  
Burial made they and osseous monument,  
To themselves, 'mid riverine swamps; swamps, too, the snake  
By red men hallowed, haunts, which multiplies  
Annual, its rattling rings; and once, which hid  
Nigh sacred well, by priestly craft, the man  
Divine, to all of irksome sanctity, fanged  
To the death; and so, held amiablest of worms,  
And kin, by common treachery, to mankind.

*Festus.* What mean these mounds we skim shaped  
animal-wise,  
Turtle's, wolf's, serpent's, favouring, or uncouth,  
The vulture's wide-winged brotherhood of death?

*Lucifer.* Clan-roots of nations these, one common  
source  
Shadowing, and, reared ere all imburghing walls,  
By stalwarth savages, in arts of life

Less skilled than feats of death, and who, where now  
 State-capitals stand, hounded the hills; as, far  
 Eastwards, in older sphere, and stony shape  
 Snake-headed, volumed over downs, and piled,  
 Progressive, from the Aleutians to the Basque,  
 Dracontian fanes, oracular logan, cirque  
 Slab-pillared, tell one vast and simple faith,  
 Rudely divine; perchance, from heaven. But now,  
 To reach where Erie through Niagara hurls  
 Precipitant all her thunderous waters down  
 His crescent steep, and so to Ontario breaks  
 A continent's discontent which else, bulged up,  
 Might the whole Firm-land flood.

*Festus.*

One sound all drowns;

'Tis as Earth's tongue.

*Lucifer.*

Away! Ice now and snow

And frozen firth our echoing hoofs invite  
 Towards the sacred grove to Esquimo known,  
 Whence, chipped by giant woodman, man and brute  
 Fell earthwards, upwards, birds, in sea dropped, fish:  
 So fable Arctic folk, tribes sparse and spare;  
 Whose crooked crones, in glittering huts of ice,—  
 When the vivific sun, world conqueror, ends  
 Yearly his serpent path, in silent snow  
 His thunder hiding,—to their home-cloyed youth,  
 Sharpening the bone-tipped shaft for morse, or seal,  
 Quaint legends gabble of primal Eld. But see!  
 Here we are not sole travellers.

*Festus.*

Ah! yon sledge.

Half hound's land this; brave hound; of souls create  
 Sub-human gifted highest; most to man  
 Faithful,—both where the auroral arch o'erbroods  
 Graves lost, unsearched for not, and the city's heart,  
 Through life to his last sigh; and so, worthy judged  
 Such skiey deathlessness as men can give,  
 Or dogs divine, of Dian's nebulous chase,  
 Can joy in, led by their leash of light; or he,  
 Staunch grew, man-hearted, starred in holiest writ,  
 Who, burning, bays Orion's spacious steps;  
 Or good Dherreem, sung in the mighty war,  
 'Twixt chiefs of lunar lineage, and the sun's,  
 For the empery of Ind;—four-footed friend  
 To righteous rajah; he, that kingly kin  
 All blessed and deified,—lonely left, at last  
 Shakes off, disguiseful test, the shape canine,  
 And shines heaven's primal virtue, peer of gods.

*Lucifer.* Take credit for quite candid praise:

Nor dogs need we, nor sluggard sleighs.

*Festus.* I feel the iron in my blood

Drawn curiously towards the Pole;

But oh this cold congeals me ; and twere good,  
All said and done, to make our goal.

*Lucifer.* Thou carest not, then, to tread the terrible  
ways

Which lead to nature's mightiest mysteries, down  
To the humming axis of these surface lands,  
Where, earth-guiding, the magnet mountain stands,  
Brainlike, ensconced beneath her snowy crown.

*Festus.* Not now ; as yet, enough to view  
Earth's outward.

*Lucifer.* So then, hence !

*Festus.* Adieu  
America, thou, half-brother of the world ;  
With something good and bad of every land ;  
Greater than thee have lost their seat ;  
Greater scarce none can stand.

*Lucifer.* Just touch the Arctic ring will we ;  
For our horses snort and snuff the sea,  
And pant for where they ought to be.

*Festus.* Well, here's the sea ; and as we flew in,  
I said, let Darkness follow Ruin.

*Lucifer.* 'Twas right, spur on. Come, Darkness, come,  
Think of thy well-strown stall.

*Festus.* And Ruin ?

*Lucifer.* Oh yes ; there's a stable-home  
For Ruin, too, after all.

*Festus.* For me, I fear no fate to come,  
Not that which bids me fall.  
Oh happy, if at last I lie  
Within some pearled and coralled cave ;  
Where high o'erhead the booming surge,  
And moaning billow, shall chant my dirge ;  
And the storm-blast, as it hurrieth by,  
Shall, answering, howl to the mermaid's sigh,  
And the nightwind's mournful minstrelsy,  
Their requiem over my grave.

*Lucifer.* Through morn and midnight, sunset and high  
noon,  
One hour hath ta'en us ; o'er all land and sea,  
O'er earthquake opening, and iceberg have we  
Swept in swift safety.

*Festus.* Hour, o'er now, too soon.  
Greenland and Iceland far a-lee ;  
The crests of mountains now I see  
Through rolling mists, grey-gilded, burst ;  
And islands still beloved by me ;  
Ben-Loda, mount of God, and Nevis, first  
Saluted of the sun ; and, Erin's isle  
Westmost whereon day's lord his parting smile  
Through groves of worship, dedicate to fate,

Utters, ere yet, kinglike, in fickle state  
He turns to flatterers of his greeting ray.

*Lucifer.* There, see the causeway, we'll not foot, to-day,  
Of giants, who from Ierne through deep sea,  
By long columnar jetty, and pillared pier  
Basaltic, crystal-capped, and close as canes  
In Javan jungle, treacherous access sought  
To Albyn's kingly clans, and fate-stoned throne;  
'Twixt Erin, thence, and Cambria steer  
The lands are close, but be it known  
I have been in sharper straits ere now.

*Festus.* See Snowdon's bossy back, and more  
Remote, in ice, and snow-light hoar  
Plinlimmon's ravine-wrinkled brow.

*Lucifer.* By Severn's sea our sinuous course now bends;  
Yon windy cliff, your isle of isles that ends;  
And Lizard porphyry caved.

*Festus.* 'Twas here of old,  
And old world tales the air load, gods uncouth,  
Ogres iniquitous, dwelled, whom Corin, proud  
(Of Tyrrhene monsters slain, slew, and at once  
Sheer o'er the crags dashed; Cormoran, and those vile,  
Whose far descendant Rhytho, Uther's son  
Brained with red brand on the high Cornubian mount  
That still o'erpeers the Atlantic; once, as well,  
The Llionnese viewed, and all the Armoric shore  
Inundate now for aye, but haunt of brood  
Like these enorme, in lays chivalric famed;  
Who in towers of brass abode, or burnished steel,  
That all the region round imblazed; with throng  
(Of damsels dungeoned, and brave knights unhorsed;  
Fire-breathing dragons, guardians of their gates;  
But all, in fine, by some proud paladin  
Of table round, or peer imperial quelled.

*Lucifer.* Behold the common narrow sea,  
Which like a strong man's arm,  
Keeps back two foes whose lips, wrath-white,  
Prove hearts with rage oft warm.  
It is very sure, this land we near  
Should all things take their natural course,  
Sometime in sea will disappear.

*Festus.* And if they do, it might be worse;  
In peace and war she is with the sea,  
By fate conjoined inseparably.  
How shall my country fight,  
When her foes rise against her;  
But with thine arm, O sea,  
The arm which thou lentst her?  
Where shall my country be buried,  
When bounden to die?  
Let her choose out her place in the sphere,

Where she shall lie.

She hath brethren more than a hundred,

And they all want room ;

They may die, and may lie where they live ;

They shall not mix with her doom.

Where, but within thine arms, O sea, O sea ?

Wherein she hath lived and gloried, let her rest be.

When we dream of her end, and her tomb,

We will rise, and will say to the sea, flow over her ;

We will cry to the death of the deep, Cover her.

England, my country, great and free,

Heart of the world, I leap to thee.

*Lucifer.* It's land ; and that's enough for me.

*Festus.* What were the world's without thine history ?

Let faith her rites, her creeds to Israel trace ;

Earth's lore, earth's art, let flow from Græcia's race ;

Owe Christendom to Rome its states, its laws ;

The freedom of mankind is England's cause.

To science, learning, law, religion, she

Adds nature's grace supreme, of liberty.

Mother of empire, native to command,—

Whose stern self-rule to fickle realms makes known

A love which serves, but serving, awes, the throne ;

Hope, yet, and aid, of thrall, in every land ;

She first refused with slavery to defile

Her shores ; and God looked down, and blessed the Isle ;

Saying :—In this cause, Albion, fare thou forth ;

Thy fleets, thy hosts, thy peoples, round the earth ;

Elect of powers ! be first in wealth, as worth ;

To lands less blessed teach thou fair freedom's charms ;

Fear not the snares of peace ; nor war's alarms ;

And leave with heaven the issue of Our arms.

*Lucifer.* 'Tis not for that, she is dear to me,

What I admire is her humility.

*Festus.* Sanctuary of peace and song ; of toil col-  
leagued

With science, ever largening this, like the orb

Loaded with golden rain of annual stars,

Preponderative. prolific ; kingly wealth

Bringing to many a black mechanic burgh

Gas-breath'd, steam-pulsed ; and which, by day obscure,

Strangely at night, bright. oft to star-seer skilled,

Who in neighbouring planet notes, maybe, with lens

Than ours more potent, earth's pale spherelet, gives

Sore brain-ache to divine ;—isle, with all charms

Natural and social blessed : here, cultured plain,

Green hill, there ; grainy level, and fruit-fraught vale ;

Downs, dear to freedom ; dim and misty moor,

Where aches the eye with objectless survey ;

And long dun moss, by cairn or cromlech crowned ;

Or lithic dance of giants, 'neath the moon ;  
 Hurlers, or wrestlers, who by sport profaned  
 Hours holy ; or bridal revellers, like beguiled,  
 That, scornful of Sabbatic peace, till primes,  
 Footed their fool's reel ; and so, fitly earned  
 Their stony transformation ; days of rest  
 Are theirs, now, unpervert ; now, o'er their ears,  
 The gold-stacked thunder-pipes grave anthems drone,  
 And voluntaries, in vain ; in vain to them  
 Church-chimes, for aye.

*Lucifer.* Indeed 'tis very sad.  
 Legends are these quite touching in their tone :  
 Instructive, too, remark, when left alone.  
 Now get on land ; quick, hie along ;  
 O'er forest, copse, and glade ;  
 We have but a league or two more to go,  
 Before our journey's made ;  
 With speed that flings the sun into the shade.  
 See the gold sunshine, patching,  
 And streaming and streaking across  
 The grey-green oaks ; and catching,  
 By its long brown beard, the moss.

*Lucifer.* I have shown thee as I promised, earth,  
 That rightly thou mightst count its worth,  
 To have and hold. To me it seems  
 Like valuable with last month's dreams.

*Festus.* It favours virtue to have been  
 But witness of a glorious scene,  
 Where truth hath taught, and wisdom dwelt ;  
 Where freedom fought, and faith aspired  
 To earn the love her soul desired ;  
 Where right hath triumphed, wrong hath knelt ;  
 And peace the heaven diffused she felt.

*Lucifer.* It may be. Should I find it so,  
 Another time, and elsewhere, thou shalt know.  
 But now ; ah, here's an open plain ;  
 Here, we'll get down.

Away, good steeds : be off, again.

*Festus.* We must be near to town.  
 I am bound to thee for ever  
 By the pleasure of this day ;  
 Henceforth let us never sever,  
 Come what come may.

## X.

After travel, homelier life,  
 A country merry-making, a village feast  
 May even please, where, with the local world  
 We mix in private ; seriously converse  
 Of light things, lightly enough of serious. Skilled  
 To revive dead lore, and magnify extinct  
 Arts, and extol symbolic wisdom, here  
 The world-man in the student finds a friend.  
 Henceforth a power in life, or open, or hid,  
 The new star mounts the mid-sky ; from his stance  
 Acts fateful ; now opposing, now conjoined.  
 Record of strange spheres hear, scarce stranger still  
 Than ours. Let hope just thought of deathless soul  
 Kind Deity, and the dole which aye itself  
 Recrowns from ruin's fruit, form. Spirit is here  
 As at dead water balanced : back no more  
 Can it ; advance 'twill not. How ends the strife ?  
 Weight well with worlds the star-scale, and with ends  
 Incompassable of man unhelped, who'd win  
 This soul.

*A Village Feast. Evening Twilight.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER. *Afterwards* OTHERS.

*Festus.* It is getting dark. One has to walk quite  
 close

To see the pretty faces that we meet.

*Lucifer.* A disagreeable necessity, most  
 Truly.

*Festus.* We'll rest upon this bridge. I'm tired.  
 Yon tall slim tree ! does it not seem as made  
 For its place just there, a kind of natural maypole ?  
 Beyond, the lighted stalls with the good things stored  
 Of childhood's simple world : and behind them  
 The shouting showman, and the clashing cymbal ;  
 The open-doored cottages and blazing hearths ;  
 The little ones running up with naked feet,  
 And cake in either hand, to their mother's lap ;  
 Old and young laughing ; schoolboys with their play-  
 things ;

Clowns cracking jokes ; and lasses with sly eyes,  
 And the smile settling on their sun-flecked cheek,  
 Like noon upon the mellow apricot ;  
 Make up a scene I can for once give in to ;  
 It must please all, the social and the selfish :  
 Are they not happy ?

*Lucifer.* Why, what matters it ?  
 They seem so : that's enough.

*Festus.* But not the same.

*Lucifer.* Yet truth and falsehood meet in seeming,  
like  
The falling leaf and shadow on the pool's face.  
And these are joys like beauty, but skin deep.

*Festus.* Remove all such, and what's the joy of earth?  
It is they create the appetite for life;  
Give zest and relish to the lot of millions.  
And take the gust for them away, what's left?  
A skeleton of existence, soulless, mean.

*Lucifer.* It is pleasure men prefer to power. To stoop  
Is easier than to climb; and power's above,  
Pleasure, below the soul. They are but few  
Who feel not, this, a weakness, that a woe.

(*Children at play.*)

*Festus.* Play away, good ones. I could romp with  
you.

To look, sometimes, upon a child's fair face  
Such innocence, outward, and intense, of life  
Is resurrection to the heart; and oft,  
To those who mole-like grope through an earthy life,  
What know they else so indicative of heaven,  
So vast in blessing, as these god-sent kings  
And queens, according to love's dynasties?  
The might and the delight of nations lies  
In them, and 'tis for them earth's what it is.

*Lucifer.* Another row of dragon's teeth, a row  
Of grinders, look ye.

*An Old Man.* Pity the poor blind man.

*Festus.* Here is substantial pity.

*Old Man.* Heaven reward you.

*Festus.* Blind as the blue skies after sunset! Blind!  
Well I too tire of looking upon what is.  
One might as well see beauty never more,  
As view with empty eye. Would all were over!  
Our pleasures leave us as sighs leave the heart,  
Though each sigh leaves it lower; still relieved.  
Nought happens but what happens to oneself.  
It is sad to think how few life's pleasures are,  
Wherefor men risk eternal good. What else,  
One's self except, one's self can satisfy?

*Lucifer.* Too much, soon tells its tale. I quite feel for  
you.

*Festus.* It is sad success, to antedate life, and reap  
'Gainst rule, one's field, ere noon. For what results  
But laborous restitution, sowing, reaping,  
Losing again? Such toil, such gain alike,  
Tire. Live too slowly, can we, to be good,  
And happy?

*Lucifer.* Nay, how suddenly wise!

*Festus.*

But youth,

Burning to forestall nature, will not wait Time,  
 Stern sculls-man with his barge, to ferry it o'er  
 Life's stream, but flings itself into the flood,  
 Intolerantly, and perisheth. Well, what charm's  
 In time, as time, what good? Are longest days  
 Happier than short ones? What then can age offer?  
 It is sometime now since I was here. We leave  
 Our home in youth—no matter to what end;  
 Study—or strife—or pleasure, or what not;  
 And coming back in few short years, we find  
 All as we left it, outside; the old elms,  
 The house, grass, gates, and latchet's self-same click;  
 But lift that latchet,—all is changed as doom:  
 The servants have forgotten our step, and more  
 Than half of those who knew us know us not.

Adversity, prosperity, the grave,  
 Play a round game with friends. On some the world  
 Hath shot its evil eye, and they are passed  
 From honour and remembrance; and a stare  
 Is all the mention of their names receives;  
 And people know no more of them than they know  
 The shapes of clouds at midnight, a year hence.

*Lucifer.* Let us move on to where the dancing is;  
 We soon shall see how happy they all are.  
 Here is a loving couple quarrelling;  
 And there, another. It is quite distressing.  
 See yonder. Two men fighting!

*Festus.* What avail  
 These vile exceptions to the rule of joy?

*Lucifer.* Behold the happiness of which thou spakest!  
 The highest hills are miles below the sky;  
 And so far is the lightest heart below  
 True happiness.

*Festus.* To one who knows so well  
 What that is, doubtless 'tis a snake-like world,  
 Tail aye in mouth, as if it ate itself,  
 And moralled time. To others kindlier masked,  
 A make-believing cheat, it shows; to me,  
 The world seems like yon children's merry-go-round;  
 What men admire are carriages and hobbies,  
 Which the exalted manikins enjoy.  
 There is a noisy ragged crowd below  
 Of urchins drives it round, who only get  
 The excitement for their pains—best gain perhaps;  
 For it is not they who labour that grow dizzy  
 Nor sick; that's for the idle proud, above;  
 Who soon dismount, more weary of enjoying,  
 Than those below of working; and but fair.  
 It is wretchedness or recklessness alone  
 Keeps us alive. Were we happy we should die.

Yet what is death ? I like to think on death :  
 It is but the appearance of an apparition.  
 One ought to tremble ; but oughts stand for nothing.  
 I hate the thought of wrinkling up to rest ;  
 The toothlike, aching, ruin of the body,  
 With the heart all out, and nothing left but edge.  
 Give me the long high bounding sense of life,  
 Which cries, let me but leap into my grave,  
 And I'll not mind the when, nor where. We never  
 Care less for life than when enjoying it.  
 Youth, youth, shrink not to die. What is, to die ?  
 I cannot grasp the meaning more than can  
 An oak's arms clasp the blast that blows upon it.  
 There is an air-like something which must be,  
 And yet not to be seen, nor to be touched.  
 I am bound to die ; for having been to myself,  
 Every thing, there is nothing left but nothing,  
 To be again.

*Lucifer.* Hark ! here's a ballad-singer.

*Ballad-Singer.* All of my own composing !

*Festus.* Yes, yes—we know.

SINGER. My gipsy maid ! my gipsy maid !  
 I bless and curse the day  
 I lost the light of life, and caught  
 The grief which maketh grey.  
 Would that the light which blinded me  
 Had saved me on my way !

My night-haired love ! so sweet she was,  
 So fair and blithe was she ;  
 Her smile was brighter than the moon's,  
 Her eyes the stars might see.

I met her by her lane-spread tent,  
 Beside a moss-green stone,  
 And bade her make, not mock, my fate  
 My fortune was her own.  
 Thou art but yet a boy, she said,  
 And I a woman grown.

I am a man in love, I cried :  
 My heart was early manned :  
 She smiled, and only drooped her eyes,  
 And then let go my hand.  
 We stood a minute ; neither spake  
 What each must understand.

I told her, so she would be mine,  
 And follow where I went,  
 She straight should have a bridal bower  
 Instead of gipsy tent.

Or would she have me wend with her,  
 The world between should fall ;  
 For her I would fling up faith and friends,  
 And name, and fame, and all.

Her smile so bright froze while I spake,  
And ice was in her eye ;  
So near, it seemed ere touch her heart  
I might have kissed the sky.

I said that if she loved to rule,  
Or if she longed to reign,  
I would make her Queen of every race  
Which tearlike trod the world's sad face,  
Or bleed at every vein.

She laid her finger on her lip,  
And pointed to the sky ;  
There is no God to come, she said :  
Dost thou not fear to die ?

And what is God, I said, to thee ?  
Thy people worship not.  
The good, the happy, and the free,  
She said, they need no God.

I looked until I lost mine eyes ;  
I felt as though I were  
In a dark cave, with one weak light—  
The light of life—with her ;  
And that was wasting fast away ;  
I watched, but would not stir.

Again she took my hand in hers,  
And read it o'er and o'er ;  
Ah ! eyes so young, so sweet, I said,  
Make as they read love's lore.

She held my hand—I trembled whilst—  
For sorely soon I felt  
She made the love-cross she foretold,  
And all the woe she dealt.

Unhappy I should be, she said,  
And young to death be given :  
I told her I believed in her,  
Not in the stars of heaven.

Hush ! we breathe heaven, she said, and bowed ;  
And the stars speak through me.  
Let heaven, I cried, take care of heaven !  
I only care for thee.

She shrank ; I looked, and begged a kiss ;  
I knew she had one for me ;  
She would deny me not, she said,  
But give me none would she.

My gipsy maid ! my gipsy maid !  
'Tis three long years like this,  
Since there I gave and got from thee  
That meeting, parting kiss.

I saw the tears start in her eye,  
And trickle down her cheek ;  
Like falling stars across the sky,  
Escaping from their Maker's eye :  
I saw, but spared to speak.

Go, and forget ! she said, and slid  
 Below her lowly tent ;  
 I will not, cannot ;—hear me, girl !  
 She heard not, and I went.

At eve, by sunset, I was there,  
 The tent was there no more ;  
 The fire which warmed her flickered still—  
 The fire she sat before.

I stood by it, till through the dark  
 I saw not where it lay ;  
 And then like that my heart went out  
 In ashy grief and grey.

My gipsy maid ! my gipsy maid !  
 Oh ! let me bless this day ;  
 This day it was, I met thee first,  
 And yet it shall be and is cursed,  
 For thou hast gone away.

*Farmer.* And glad we'd be if the whole tribe should  
 follow.

*Lucifer.* Another, please—not quite so gloomy, friend.

*Girl.* I wonder if the tale it tells be true.

*Singer.* I dare say—but you want a merrier. Do you ?  
 Every man's life hath its apocrypha ;  
 Mine has, at least. I have said more than need be.  
 It happened, too, when I was very young.  
 We never meet such gipsies when we are old ;  
 And yet we more complain of age than youth.  
 Now, make a ring, good people. Let me breathe !

[*Sings.*

Oh ! the wee green neuk, the sly green neuk,  
 The wee sly neuk, for me !  
 Whare the wheat is wavin' bright and brown,  
 And the wind is fresh and free.  
 Whare I weave wild weeds, and out o' reeds  
 Kerve whistles as I lay ;  
 And a douce low voice is murmurin' by,  
 Through the lee-lang simmer day.  
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c.

And where a' things luik as though they lo'ed  
 To languish in the sun ;  
 And that if they feed the fire they dree,  
 They wadna ae pang were gone.  
 Whare the lift aboon is still as death,  
 And bright as life can be ;  
 While the douce low voice says, na, na, na !  
 But ye mauna luik sae at me.  
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c.

Whare the lang rank bent is saft and cule,  
 And freshenin' till the feet ;  
 And the spot is sly, and the spinnie high,  
 Whare my love and I mak' seat :

And I teaze her till she rins, and then,  
 I catch her roun' the tree ;  
 While the poppies shak' their heids and blush :  
 Let them blush till they drap, for me !  
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c.

*Festus.* And all who know such feelings and such scenes  
 Will, I am sure, reward you. Here—take this.

*Others.* And this, and this—too !

*Singer.* Thank ye all, good friends !

*Festus.* There's much that hath no merit but its truth,  
 And no excuse but nature. Nature does  
 Never wrong : it is society which sins.  
 Look at the bee upon the wing among flowers ;  
 How brave, how bright his life. Then mark him hived,  
 Cramped, cringing in his self-built social cell.  
 Thus is it in the world-hive : most where men  
 Lie deep in cities as in drifts, death drifts ;  
 Nosing each other like a flock of sheep ;  
 Not knowing and not caring whence nor whither  
 They come or go, so that they fool together.

*Lucifer.* It is quite fair to halve these lives, and say  
 This life is nature's, that society's,  
 When both are side-views only of one thing.

*Farmer.* Here comes his reverence. Sir, it does one  
 good  
 To see you come among us, in these days.

*Parson.* Why, I have but little comfort in these  
 pastimes ;  
 And any heart, turned Godwards, feels more joy  
 In one short hour of prayer, than e'er was raised  
 By all the feasts on earth, since their foundation.  
 But no one will believe us ; as if we  
 Had never known the vain things of the world,  
 Nor lain and slept in sin's seducing shade,  
 Listless, until God woke us ; made us feel  
 We should be up and stirring in the sun ;  
 For everything had to be done ere night.  
 What is all this joy and jollity about ?  
 Grant there may be no sin. What good is it ?

*Farmer.* I can't defend these feasts, sir, and can't  
 blame.

*Parson.* Good evening, friends ! Why, Festus ! I  
 rejoice  
 We meet again. I have a young friend here,  
 A student—who hath stayed with us of late.  
 You would be glad I know to know each other ;  
 Therefore be known so.

*Festus.* You are a student, sir.

*Student.* I profess little. But it is a title  
 A man may claim perhaps with modesty.

*Festus.* True. All mankind are students. How to live  
 And how to die forms the great lesson still.  
 I know what study is: it is to toil  
 Hard, through the hours of the sad midnight watch,  
 At tasks which seem a systematic curse,  
 And course of bootless penance. Night by night,  
 To trace one's thought as if on iron leaves;  
 And sorrowful as though it were the mode  
 And date of death we wrote on our own tombs:  
 Wring a slight sleep out of the couch, and see  
 The self-same moon which lit us to our rest,  
 Her place scarce changed perceptibly in heaven,  
 Now light us to renewal of our toils.  
 This, to the young mind, wild and all in leaf,  
 Which knowledge, grafting, paineth. Fruit soon comes;  
 And more than all our troubles pays us powers;  
 So that we joy to have endured so much:  
 Slaved, slain ourselves, almost. More; it is to strive  
 To bring the mind up to one's own esteem:  
 Who but the generous fail? It is to think,  
 While thought is standing thick upon the brain,  
 As dew upon the brow—for thought is brain-sweat—  
 And gathering quick and dark, like storms in summer,  
 Until convulsed, condensed, in lightning sport,  
 It plays upon the heavens of the mind;  
 Opens the hemisphered abysses here,  
 And we become revealers to ourselves.

*Student.* When night hath set her silver lamp on high,  
 Then is the time for study: when heaven's light  
 Pours itself on the page, like prophecy  
 On time, unglooming all its mighty meanings;  
 It is then we feel the sweet strength of the stars,  
 And magic of the moon.

*Lucifer.* It's a bad habit.

*Student.* And wisdom dwells in secret, and on high,  
 As do the stars. The sun's diurnal glare  
 Is for the worldly herd; but for the wise,  
 The cold pure radiance of the night-born light,  
 Wherewith is inspiration of the truth.  
 Time was, I ne'er sought rest before the sun  
 Rose broad; and, maybe, for that sacrifice,  
 Through a like length of time as that now gone,  
 The world shall speak of me six thousand years hence.

*Lucifer.* How know you that the world won't end  
 to-morrow?

*Parson.* I, now, an early riser, love to hail  
 The dreamy struggles of the stars with light,  
 And the recovering breath of earth, sleep drowned,  
 Awakening to the wisdom of the sun,  
 And life of light within the tent of heaven;

To kiss the feet of Morning as she walks  
In dewy light along the hills, while they,  
All-odorous as an angel's fresh-culled crown,  
Unveil to her their bounteous loveliness.

*Student.* I am devote to study. Worthy books  
Are not companions; they are solitudes;  
We lose ourselves in them and all our cares.  
The further back we search the human mind,  
Mean in the mass, but in the instance great;  
Which starting first with deities, and stars,  
And broods of beings earth-born, heaven-begot,  
And all the bright side of the broad world, now  
Doats upon dreams and dim atomic truths;  
Is all for comfort and no more for glory;  
The nobler and more marvellous it shows.  
Trifles like these make up the present time;  
The Iliad and the Pyramids the past.

*Festus.* The future will have glory not the less.  
I can conceive a time when the world shall be  
Much better visibly, and when, as far  
As social life and its relations tend,  
Men, morals, manners shall be lifted up  
To a pure height we know not of nor dream;  
When all men's rights and duties shall be clear,  
And charitably exercised and borne;  
When education, conscience, and good deeds  
Shall have just equal sway, and civil claims;  
Great crimes shall be cast out, as were of old  
Devils possessing madmen; truth shall reign,  
Nature shall be rethroned, and man sublimed.

*Student.* Oh! then may heaven come down again to  
earth;  
And dwell with her, as once, like to a friend.

*Lucifer.* As like each other as a sword and scythe.  
Oh! then shall lions mew and lambkins roar.

*Festus.* And having studied—what next?

*Student.* Much I long  
To view the capital city of the world.  
The mountains, the great cities, and the sea,  
Are each an era in the life of youth.

*Festus.* There to get worldly ways, and thoughts, and  
schemes;  
To learn to detect, distrust, despise mankind;  
To ken a false factitious glare amid much  
That shines with seeming saintlike purity;  
To gloss misdeeds; to trifle with great truths;  
To pit the brain against the heart, and plead  
Wit before wisdom; these are the world's ways:  
It learns us to lose that in crowds, which we

Must after seek alone, our innocence ;  
And when the crowd is gone.

*Student.* Not only that :  
There, all great things are round one. Interests  
Mighty and mountainous even of estimate,  
Are daily heaped or scattered 'neath the eye.  
Great deeds, great thoughts, great schemes, world-better-  
ing, all  
In practice possible, or in purpose great,  
Of human nature, there, are common things.  
Men make themselves be deathless as in spite ;  
As if they waged some lineal feud with time ;  
As though their fathers were immortal, too ;  
And immortality an every-day  
Accomplishment.

*Festus.* Fie ! fie ! it is more for this :  
Amid gayer people, and more wanton ways,  
To give a loose to all the lists of youth ;  
To train your passion flowers high ahead,  
And bind them on your brow as others do.  
The mornlit revel and the shameless mate ;  
The tabled hues of darkness and of blood ;  
The published bosom and the crowning smile ;  
The cup excessive ; and if aught there be  
More vain than these or wanton,—that to have—  
Have all but always in intent, effect,  
Or fact. Nay, nay, deny it not : I know.  
Youth hath a strange and strong desire to try  
All feelings on the heart : it is very wrong,  
And dangerous, and deadly : strive against it !

*Student.* It might be some old sage was warning us.

*Festus.* Youth might be wise. We suffer less from  
pains  
Than pleasures.

*Student.* I should like to see the world,  
And gain that knowledge which is—

*Festus.* Barrener  
Than ice ; possessing and producing nought  
But means and forms of death or vanity.  
The world is just as hollow as an eggshell.  
It is a surface, not a solid, mind :  
And all this boasted knowledge of the world  
Means but acquaintance with low things, it seems  
To me, things evil, or things indifferent.

*Farmer.* Much more is said of knowledge than its  
worth.

A man may gain all knowledge here, and yet  
Be, after death, as much in the dark as I.

*Lucifer.* What makes you know of living after death ?

*Farmer.* Why, nothing that I know, and there it is !—

But something I am told has told me so.  
 No angel ever came to me to prove it ;  
 And all my friends have died and left no ghosts.

*Festus.* All that is good a man may learn from himself ;  
 And much, too, that is bad.

*Parson.* Nay, let me speak !  
 Aught that is good the soul receives of God,  
 When he hath made it his ; and until then,  
 Man cannot know, nor do, nor be, aught good.  
 Oh ! there is nought on earth worth being known  
 But God and our own souls—the God we have  
 Within our hearts ; for it is not the hope,  
 Nor faith, nor fear, nor notions others have  
 Of God can serve us, but the sense and soul  
 We have of him within us ; and, for men,  
 God loves us men each individually,  
 And deals with us in order, soul by soul.

*Lucifer.* But this is not the place for sermons.

*Parson.* True.  
 We heard once, Festus, you were travelling :  
 Pray, in what parts ?

*Festus.* Among the outer orbs.

*Parson.* Nay, surely not so far ; except in thought,  
 Perchance, or calculation.

*Festus.* A month back  
 I was in giant land.

*Parson.* Ah ! fee-faw-fum ?—  
 They did not eat you, there ?

*Festus.* Oh ! no. They much  
 Preferred their usual fare.

*Parson.* What might it be ?  
 Not Englishmen and hasty pudding, eh ?

*Festus.* They are no more cannibals than you or I ;  
 But are of various tastes, and patronize,  
 I know, rich diet.

*Parson.* It's excusable.  
 And they are great consumers, I dare say.

*Festus.* A wheat-stack of our friend's here would but  
 make

One loaf of bread for them. Oak trees they use  
 As pickles, and tall pines as toothpicks ; whales,  
 In their own blubber fried, serve as mere fish  
 To bait their appetites. Boiled elephants,  
 Rhinoceroses, and roasted crocodiles—  
 Every thing dished up whole—with lions stewed,  
 Shark sauce, and eagle pie, and young giraffes,  
 Make up a potluck dinner,—if there's plenty.  
 Then as for game, the pterodactyles  
 And ichthyosauri are great dainties there,

Coming in season only once an age.  
They reckon there by ages, not by years.

*Student.* And as to beverage?

*Festus.* Oh; if thirsty, they  
Will lay them down and drink a river dry,  
Nor once draw breath.

*Parson.* Ah! camel, gnat, and all.

*Festus.* Others are more abstemious, and consume  
Egg-broth and simples chiefly. There was one  
Who when I saw him first sat by a fire:  
An egg, an hour-glass, and a water bowl  
Being before him. All he said was this:—

When the sand is run  
The egg is done.

This he first boiled, then roasted, and then ate.

*Student.* What sort of one? Perhaps an ostrich egg?

*Festus.* Much larger. Here is nothing of the kind.  
The yolk was like the sun seen in a fog;  
The white was thin and clouded, and the shell,  
Heavy and hard, as is our earth-pie crust.

*Lucifer.* What kind of bird it was that laid it—  
guess!

*Parson.* Continue. You have travelled in the dark;  
But wisdom sometimes inns with ignorance.  
What of their persons, habits, language, creed?

*Festus.* Huger than Naphelim of old, whose bulk  
Cast cloudlike shadows on the eclipsèd earth;  
Huger than those our childhood's chap-books brand;  
Or all whose deeds till now defile romance;  
Albadan, and those monstrous, sire and son,  
Whom Amadis, the flower of knights, o'erthrew,  
Not counting much of giants—so to win  
His Oriana bright at Miré fleur;  
In form and stature, these, as mountain-sized,  
Could walk through woods like ours as through long grass.  
They live seven thousand years of years like man's,  
And then die suddenly; when death takes place  
They burn the bodies always in a lake,  
The spray whereof is ashes, and its depths  
Unfathomable fire; and never mourn;  
Use little verbal language, but express  
All thought by action, and oracular use  
Of eye or hand. Their chief religion seems  
Self punishment by sin and rites of fire.  
'Twould do the godless good to visit once,  
One of this awful race whom late I saw;  
And who, were time and place more fitting—

*Student.*

Nay,

We are apart from others. Nothing save  
Yon heavenly ark which floats among the stars,

Now resting on an Ararat of clouds,  
Hath leave to overlook us.

*Parson.* Pray proceed.

*Festus.* Once I had travelled through a weary world,  
Than all in heaven more barren and forlorn;  
Dark as the wild heart of a thunder-cloud;  
Strewn with the wrecks and ashes of all orbs,  
Firestranded, rolling in quick agony;  
Peopled with burning ghosts dislimbed and charred;  
And in the midst a giant, by a fire,  
Kindled of burning passions, and full fed  
With sins long seasoned; at whose feet there stood  
A crystal cistern, brimmed with human tears,  
Which sprinkled but inflamed the fire withal;  
The giant all while watching with stern mien,  
And ruthless interest the whole. Dread sir!  
Said I, as I drew near, what angers thee?  
He answered not, but pointed; and I saw,  
Full in the midst of that infernal fire,  
Blazing aghast in solar solitude,  
A panting shadow, which, with skeleton eyes,  
And woe-gouged countenance, whereon was hung  
A white eclipse, like darkness pale with pain,—  
Watched for the disappearance of the heavens  
With a despairing hope: entranced it lay  
In palpitant torments self-perpetuate, racked  
Ever; anon turned restlessly, and cried  
Woe, woe is me! Eternal Spirit God!  
Thy wrath is heaviest when made bearable.  
Put forth thy strength and sweep the universe,  
With me, into the night of nothingness,  
That sin and soul may perish. Woe is me!  
Still shine the blessed heavens, and still, like ice  
By art fire-frozen, my dole my dole renews.  
And the giant laughed, glad in his ministry  
Of scathe; and blew, with all his breath, his hell,  
Still fiercer—till it bellowed, and the orb  
Beneath my foot sole seared, and I took leave;  
For there was somewhat in the giant's air,  
And his huge balefire, and the naked plain—  
Bald as the scalp of Time—which caused me dread.

*Parson.* I doubt not all you say is memory's birth,  
Conceived of fiction. Never mortal man  
Hath travelled in another sphere than this.  
It was a vision, Festus, say, a dream.

*Festus.* Say as you will, is not a dream a fact?

*Parson.* Dreams you have dreamed till you believe in  
them;  
But such as these are awesome. Not the less  
View them vouchsafed as warnings. Oft the mind,

Freed by angelic sleep from bodily bonds,  
Knows scenes and themes like these you have named, which  
tend

To edifying much. Such travel is  
Like mine, the travail simply of the brain.

*Festus.* It is pure reality.

*Parson.*

Well, say no more.

We may pursue the sense of things too far.  
True travellers they through all the lands of life,  
Moral, emotional, or love's sunny zone ;  
The palm-graced pilgrims of truth's holy land,  
Who, all experienced, reason, wisdom find,  
And virtue less without than in themselves.  
So through all moral schools, the cold, stern porch,  
Divine, impassive ; garden gay, where still  
Dwelt pleasure scarce than virtue less severe  
And stately grove of lofty lore select ;  
The truth sought soul progresses, till we find  
Our home is where she leads ; and we are guests  
But of our guide ; the shrine she shows, herself.  
The golden side of heaven's great shield is faith ;  
The silver, reason. You see this, I that ;  
The junction is invisible to both.

*Student.* One thing is sometimes said, another meant.

*Lucifer.* What are your politics ?

*Farmer.*

I have none.

*Lucifer.*

Good.

*Farmer.* I have my thoughts. I am no party man.

I care for measures more than men, but think  
Some little may depend upon the men ;  
Something in fires depends upon the grate.

*First Boy.* What are your colours ?

*Second.*

Blue as heaven.

*Third.*

And mine

Are yellow as the sun.

*First.*

Mine, green as grass.

*Second.* Green's forsaken, and yellow's forsworn ;  
And blue's the colour that shall be worn.

*Student.* As to religion, politics, law, and war,  
But little need be said. All are required,  
And all are well enough. Of liberty,  
And slavery, and tyranny we hear  
Much ; but the human mind affects extremes.  
The heart is in the middle of the system ;  
And all affections gather round the truth,  
The moderated joys and woes of life.

I love my God, my country, kind and kin ;  
Nor would I see a dog wronged of his bone.

My country ! if a wretch should e'er arise,  
Out of thy countless sons, who would curtail

Thy freedom, dim thy glory,—while he lives  
 May all earth's peoples curse him—for of all  
 Hast thou secured the blessing; and if one  
 Exist who would not arm for liberty,  
 Be he, too, cursèd living: and when dead,  
 Let him be buried downwards, with his face  
 Looking to hell; and o'er his coward grave  
 The hare skulk, in her form.

*Lucifer.* Nay, gently, friend.  
 Curse nothing, not the Devil. He's beside you—  
 For aught you know.

*Student.* I neither know nor care.  
*(They pass some card-players.)*

*Festus.* Kings, queens, knaves, tens, would trick the  
 world away,  
 And it were not now and then for some brave ace.

*Student.* You see yon wretched starved old man; his  
 brow  
 Grooved out with wrinkles like the brown dry sand  
 The tide of life is leaving?

*Lucifer.* Yes, I see him.

*Student.* Last week he thought he was about to die:  
 So he bade gold be strewn beneath his pillow,  
 Gold on a chest that he might lie and see,  
 And gold put in a basin on his bed,  
 That he might dabble with his fingers in.  
 He's going now to grope for pence or pins.  
 He never gave a pin's worth in his life.  
 What would you do to him?

*Lucifer.* I would have him wrought  
 Into a living wire, which beaten out,  
 Might make a golden network for the world;  
 Then melt him inch by inch, and hell by hell,  
 Where is the law of wrath.

*Student.* Oh, charity!  
 It is a thought the Devil might be proud of—  
 Once and away. Misers and spendthrifts may  
 Torment each other in the world to come.

*Lucifer.* And thus do men apportion their own lot;  
 A grain of comfort and a sack of sin.

*Festus.* Men look on death as lightning, always far  
 Off, or in heaven. They know not it is in  
 Themselves, a strong and inward tendency,  
 The soul of every atom, every hair:  
 That nature's infinite electric life,  
 Escaping from each isolated frame,  
 Up out of earth, or down from heaven, becomes  
 To each its proper death, and adds itself  
 Thus to the great reunion of the whole.  
 There is a man in mourning! What does he here?

*Student.* He has just buried the only friend he had,  
And now comes hither to enjoy himself.

*Festus.* Why will we dedicate the dead to God,  
And not ourselves the living? Oft we speak,  
With tears of joy and trust, of some dear friend  
As surely up in heaven; while that same soul,  
For aught we know, may be shuddering even in hell  
To hear his name named; or a wandering ghost,  
Moon-eyed, which gasps to read on marble slab  
His virtue-lauding epitaph; or there may be  
No soul i' the case, and the fat icy worm,  
Give him a tongue, can tell us all about him.

*Student.* Here is music. Stay. That simple melody  
Comes on the heart like infant innocence,  
Pure feeling pure; while yet the new-bodied soul  
Is swinging to the motion of the heavens,  
And scarce hath caught, as yet, earth's backening course.

*Festus.* The heart is formed as earth was—its first age  
Formless and void, and fit but for itself;  
Then feelings half alive, just organized,  
Come next,—then creeping sports and purposes,—  
Then animal desires, delights, and loves—  
For love is the first and granite-like effect  
(Of things—the longest and the highest: next  
The wild and winged desires, youth's saurian schemes,  
Which creep and fly by turns; which kill and eat,  
And do disgorge each other; comes at length  
Humanity to perfect life, and divide,  
By woman. Great their bliss, but ill arrives.  
Or the insipidity of an innocent soul  
Palls: or some fatal act, a curse, a death,  
An exile's laid upon it, and it goes—  
Quits its green Eden for the sandy world,  
Where it works out its nature, as it may;  
In sweat, smiles, blood, tears, cursings, and what not.  
And giant sins possess it; and it worships  
Works of the hand, head, heart—its own or others—  
A creature worship, which excludeth God's:  
The less thrusts out the greater. Warning comes,  
But the heart fears not—feels not; till at last  
Down comes the flood from heaven; and that heart,  
Broken inwards, earthlike, to its central hell:  
Or like the bright and burning eye we see  
Inly, when pressed hard backwards on the brain,  
Ends and begins again—destroyed, is saved.  
Every man is the first man to himself,  
And Eves are just as plentiful as apples;  
Nor do we fall, nor are we saved, by proxy.  
The Eden we live in is our own heart;  
And the first thing we do, of our free choice,

Is sure and necessary to be sin.  
 Each to himself is also the last man,  
 And with him bears and earns the world's vast doom.

*Lucifer.* The only right men have is to be damned.  
 What is the good of music, or the beauty?  
 Music tells no truths.

*Festus.* True; but it suggests  
 And illustrates the highest of all truths,  
 The harmony of all things—even of earth,  
 With its great Author. Oh! there is nought so sweet  
 As lying and listening music from the hands,  
 And singing from the lips, of one we love;  
 Lips that all others should be tuned to. Then  
 The world would all be love and song; heaven's harps  
 And orbs join in; the whole be harmony;  
 Distinct, yet blended—blending all in one  
 Long and delicious tremble like a chord.  
 But to thee, God! all being is a harp  
 Whereon thou makest mightiest melody.

*Lucifer.* Hast ever been in love, friend?

*Student.* Never, I.

*Festus.* Spite of morality or of mystery, love  
 It is, which mostly destines our life.  
 What makes the world in after life I know not;  
 For our horizon alters as we age:  
 Power only can make up for the lack of love;  
 Power of some sort. The mind at one time grows  
 So fast, it fails; and then its stretch is more  
 Than its strength; but, as it opes, love fills it up,  
 Like to the stamen in the flower of life,  
 Till for the time we well-nigh grow all love;  
 And soon we feel the want of one kind heart  
 To love what's well, and to forgive what's ill,  
 In us,—that heart we play for at all risks.

*Student.* How can the heart, which lies embodied deep,  
 In blood and bone, set like a ruby eye  
 Into the breast, be made a toy for beauty,  
 And, vane-like, blown about by every wanton sigh?  
 How can the soul, the rich star-travelled stranger,  
 Who here sojourneth only for a purchase,  
 Risk all the riches of his years of toil,  
 And his God-vouched inheritance of heaven,  
 For one light taste of love? which makes forget  
 By force of juice Lethean all beside  
 Of lore, or studious gain, or so I have heard;  
 Love being itself most perishable of things,  
 A vanishing quantity, at the best.

*Lucifer.* No matter!  
 It is so; and when once you know the sport,  
 The crowded pack of passions in full cry,

The sweet deceits, the tempting obstacles,  
The smile, the sigh, the tear, and the embrace,  
With kisses close as stars in the Milky Way,  
In at the death, you cry, though 'twere your own ;  
Or, so I have heard.

*Student.* Most sound morality !  
Nothing is thought of virtue, then, nor judgment ?

*Lucifer.* Oh ! everything is thought of—but not then.  
And—judgment—no ! it is nowhere in the field.

*Student.* Slow-paced and late arriving, still it comes.  
I cannot understand this love ; I hear  
Of its idolatry, more than its respect.

*Festus.* Respect is what we owe ; love what we give.  
And men would mostly rather give than pay.  
Meanwhile let no vain teachings lead aside :  
Morality's the sole right rule for all.  
Nor could society cohere without  
Virtue were loved ; there are whose spirits walk  
Abreast of angels and the future, here.  
Respect and love thou such.

*Lucifer.* Of course you wish  
Women to love you rather than love them.  
Well, mind ! it is folly to tell women truth !  
They would rather live on lies so they be sweet.  
Never be long in one mind to one love.  
You change your practice with your subject. All  
Differ. But yet, who knows one woman well  
By heart, knows all. It is my experience ;  
And I advise on good authority.

*Festus.* Time laughs at love. It is a hateful sight,  
That bald old grey-beard jeering the boy, Love.  
Passion is from affection ; and there is nought  
So maddening and so lowering as to have  
The worse in passion. Think, when one by one,  
Pride, love, and jealousy, and fifty more  
Great feelings column up to force a heart,  
And all are beaten back, — all fail—all fall :  
The tower intact ; but risk it : we must learn.  
To know the world, be wise and be a fool.  
The heart will have its swing—the world its way :  
Who seeks to stop them, only throws himself down.  
We must take as we find : go as they go,  
Or stand aside. Let the world have the wall.  
How do you think, pray, to get through the world ?

*Student.* I mean not to get through the world at all  
But over it.

*Festus.* Aspiring ! you will find  
The world is all up-hill when we would do ;  
All down-hill when we suffer. Nay, it will part  
Like the Red Sea, so that the poor may pass.

We make our compliments to wretchedness,  
And hope the poor want nothing, and are well.  
But I mean, what profession will you choose?  
Surely you will do something for a name.

*Student.* Names are of much more consequence than things.

*Festus.* Well; here's our honest, all-exhorting friend,  
The parson—here the doctor. I am sure  
The Devil might act as moderator there,  
And do mankind some service.

*Lucifer.* In his way.

*Student.* But I care neither for men's souls nor bodies.

*Festus.* What say you to the law? Are you ambitious?

*Student.* Nor do I mind for other people's business.  
I have no heart for their predicaments:  
I am for myself. I measure everything  
By, what is it to me? from which I find  
I have but little in common with the mass,  
Except my meals and so forth; dress and sleep.  
I have that within me I can live upon:  
Spider-like, spin my place out anywhere.

*Festus.* To none of all the sciences, nor arts,  
Astral, or earthy, you feel your mind, then, drawn!

*Student.* Why no; there are so many rise and fail and fall,  
One knows not which to choose. As for the stars,  
I never look on them without dismay.  
Earth hath outrun them in our modern mind  
By worlds of odds. We have lost all sympathies  
With the e'er moving skies, and seem, ourselves,  
To the eternal less, and less concerned  
In act and use of heavenly things, than when  
Poor earth was almost all. Enough for us  
It seems, and our cold reckoners to jot down  
Their revolutions, distances, and squares;  
While the bright laws which stars and spirits rule,  
From deep-toned Saturn; from the sea-god's star,  
And thunderous bass of heaven's immediate orb,  
Whose inefficient ray, or good or ill  
Fails to decide here, to the shrill-voiced moon,  
Are buried, grave on grave. Who now will care  
To learn of things more spiritual than facts  
Totalled up, day by day? Who now aspires,  
Aweful, to attain the spells of secret power,  
And safety, say, 'gainst spirits supernal, taught  
By ancient seers and sages? Who now knows  
Of fourfold worlds and elemental spheres  
Concentric, like the ring the wizard draws  
Round him, which lord our earth; yet in such wise  
That still, through them, we may conjoin our souls  
To the starry guardians of all worlds, beyond

Moon-mansions, and heaven's burning heart, where dwell  
Celestial spirits all-knowing, and divine  
Demons? All, infinitely unsought, are deemed  
Doubtless, extinct. No danger now of aught  
Knowing, which ought not justly to be known.  
And you, ye planetary sons of light,  
Your aspects, dignities, gifts, and detriments,  
And all your heavenly houses and effects,  
Unknown to shallow sciolists, shall no more  
Meet here, devout expounders. Ye shall shine  
Henceforth, in vain, to man; cease to reward,  
(Or instigate; and you, too, ye juried signs,  
Earth's sun-surrounding path illuming, mind  
Move ye no more; nought more of faith feel men  
In the eternal order, God was deemed  
To have made common once 'tween heaven and earth;  
But all the starry inclusions of all signs  
Shall rise, and rule and pass, and no one know  
There are worlds whose spirit-rulers fraternize  
With ours; and unsuspect, high commune hold,  
In the shining voices of the spheres, with souls  
Of astral purity. The mystic charm  
In numbers, and the all-various unity  
(Of being, repetitive, which ones with God  
The whole, and coming from, to him returns,  
Allures no more man's mind, debased; nor, now,  
The mysteries of names; yet wot we well  
That natural perfection multiplied  
By spiritual, on monadic deity based,  
God's names, as known to men and angels, gives;  
And how thus Fate rules, really all, by means  
Mediate, and nominal. Take, too, chemic art;  
What do men now? Weigh atoms; count them; rate  
Their mean affinities, laws. The starry stone,  
Golden, invisible, principle of life,  
Fine quintessence of all the elements,  
Is still unbought; still flows the stream of pearl  
Beneath the magic mountain; still the scent  
As of thousand amaranth wreaths, all life which lures,  
Though vainly, unto its sweetness, floats around  
Mistlike, the shining bath where Luna laves,  
Or Sol, bright brother of that moonèd maid,  
Triumphs. The earth celestial, the live land,  
Still is, though veiled; still breathe for those who will,  
The airs of Paradise. The watery fire,  
Destructive, recreative, impalpable,  
The initial and conclusion of the world,  
The secret of creation shared 'tween God  
And man, now nature's only, timewise, still  
Waits man's deific choice; soul's simple light

Divine, wherein all rudiments blend, still burns  
 Our spirits within. The snowy gold, the seed  
 Nucleate of stars,—by wind impregn'd, of God,  
 If arbitrary of favour,—bound, being tracked,  
 Dismasked, to render rich and deathless all,  
 Hides not. The water of deathless life still flows;  
 Still bounds through nature's veins the sanative juice  
 Absolvent of disease; and still, in fine,  
 The secrets only to be told by fire,  
 Starry, or beamless, central and extreme,  
 Burn to be born. And other natures may  
 Use them, and do. In Demogorgon's hall  
 Still sits the universal mystery, life  
 Hidden in itself, but cognizable in cause,  
 By its own willing members: of man, sole,  
 The recreant spirit of the world ignored.  
 He surface-knowledge loves; the crimes of crowds  
 Calls virtue; adores the useful vices; licks  
 The gory dust from off the feet of war,  
 And swears it food for gods, though fit for fiends  
 Only; reversing, in his own vile plight,  
 The Devil's, when first he boarded this our orb,  
 A fallen angel's form, a reptile's soul.

*Lucifer.* Oh! this is libellous to man and fiend  
 And brute together.

*Student.* All are art and part  
 Of the same mystic treason. But enough!  
 I have seen the end of all earth's loftier lore.  
 There shall be no more cabala, nor magic;  
 Nor Rosicrucian nor alchymic skill;  
 Nor fairy fantasies: no more hobgoblins,  
 Nor ghosts, nor imps, nor demons. Conjurors,  
 Enchanters, witches, wizards, shall all die  
 Hopeless, and heirless; their divining arts  
 Supernal or infernal, dead, with them.  
 And so it will doubtless be with other things  
 In time; therefore will I my brain commit  
 To none of them.

*Festus.* Perchance it were wiser not:  
 Man's heart hath not half uttered itself yet,  
 And much remains to do as well as say.  
 The heart is some time ere it finds its focus.  
 And found, with the whole light of nature strained  
 To a hair's-breadth through it, oft, the things it burns  
 To search, it lights, oblivious, to their death.  
 I had not thought the world within its walls  
 Held one so versed in ignorance, so expert  
 In things impracticable. You must have lived  
 So centrally apart as not to know  
 That studies once perchance thought loftiest, since,

I have lost their footing by proved uselessness ;  
While lowlier ones, which merely better man,  
Bring him more near his Maker.

*Student.* I believe  
The world will neither better end nor worse  
For aught I do, or wish to do, or mean.

*Lucifer.* Signs of a conscientious recklessness,  
Such thoughts, as touch me and attract. I never  
So fortunate seem as in 'lighting upon friends  
Bent on their own ends, openly. Good ; be wise.

*Student.* Wisdom is not to know what others know.  
For public science patent to mankind  
I reck nought. Secret truth is that I seek.

*Lucifer.* And rightly. Pure intelligence alone,  
Unmixed with moral aims, is truly wise.  
To cheapen truth that every one may buy,  
You must so thin the gold as makes it worthless.

*Festus.* Nay, but contrariwise ; the more you spread  
The more you emulate truth's deity,  
In his best attribute, the gift of bliss  
To others. Truth for its own sake's worth little ;  
Communicated, priceless. Mix with men ;  
Not slavewise to the mass ; but having gained  
In secret freedom, truth, that moral gold  
Which mind transmutes, perfective from all thought,  
And hath in noblest souls most potent rule,  
Impart to all prepared.

*Student.* This alchemy  
How shall I learn, whereby thought truth becomes,  
And knowledge, wisdom ;—magistry divine ?

*Lucifer.* We'll speak of this sometime at leisure. I  
Know one, who could unseal this hidden lore ;  
And hold the wine of wisdom to their lips,  
Who can appreciate her divinest draught.  
Nay, more ; perchance can reconcile the aims  
Of both ; and knowledge supplement with power.

*Festus.* Well, farewell, Mr. Student. May you never  
Regret those hours which make the mind, if they  
Unmake the body ; for the sooner we  
Are fit to be all mind, the better. Blessed  
Is he whose heart is the home of the great dead,  
And their great thoughts. Who can mistake great  
thoughts ?

They seize upon the mind ; arrest and search,  
And shake it ; bow the tall soul as by wind ;  
Rush over it like a river over reeds,  
Which quaver in the current ; turn us cold,  
And pale, and voiceless ; leaving in the brain  
A rocking and a ringing ; glorious,  
But momentary, madness might it last,

And close the soul with heaven as with a seal !  
 In lieu of all these things whose loss thou mournest,  
 If earnestly or not I know not, use  
 The great and good and true which ever live ;  
 And are all common to pure eyes and true.  
 Upon the summit of each mountain-thought  
 Worship thou God, with heaven uplifted head  
 And arms horizon stretched ; for deity is seen  
 From every elevation of the soul.  
 Study the light ; attempt the high ; seek out  
 The soul's bright path ; and since the soul is fire,  
 Of heat intelligential, turn it aye  
 To the all-Fatherly source of light and life :  
 Piety purifies the soul to see  
 Visions, perpetually, of grace and power,  
 Which, to their sight who in ignorant sin abide,  
 Are now as e'er incognizable. Obey  
 Thy genius, for a minister it is  
 Unto the throne of Fate. Draw towards thy soul,  
 And centralize, the rays which are around  
 Of the divinity. Keep thy spirit pure  
 From worldly taint, by the repellant strength  
 Of virtue. Think on noble thoughts and deeds,  
 Ever. Count o'er the rosary of truth ;  
 And practise precepts which are proven wise.  
 It matters not then what thou fearest. Walk  
 Boldly and wisely in that light thou hast ;—  
 There is a hand above will help thee on.  
 I am an omnist, and believe in all  
 Religions ; fragments of one golden world  
 To be relit yet, and take its place in heaven,  
 Where is the whole, sole truth, in deity.  
 Meanwhile, his word, his law, writ soulwise here,  
 Study ; its truths love ; practise its behests,  
 They will be with thee when all else have gone.  
 Mind, body, passion all wear out ; not faith  
 Nor truth. Keep thy heart cool, or rule its heat  
 To fixed ends ; waste it not upon itself.  
 Not all the agony maybe of the damned  
 Fused in one pang, vies with that earthquake throb  
 Which wakens soul from life-waste, to let see  
 The world rolled by for aye, and we must wait  
 For our next chance the nigh eternity ;  
 Whether it be in heaven or elsewhere.

*Student.*

Sir,

I will remember this most grave advice  
 And think of you with all respect.

*Festus.*

Well, mind,

The worst of men may give the best advice.  
 Our deeds sometimes are better than our thoughts.

Commend me, friend, to everyone you meet.  
 I am an universal favourite.  
 All turn to me whenever I speak, full-faced,  
 As planets to the sun, or owls to a rushlight.  
 Farewell.

*Student.* I hope to meet again.

*Festus.* And I.

*Lucifer.* Fear not. Chance favours like recurrences.

*Festus.* Yonder's a woman singing. Let us hear her.

*SINGER.* In the grey church tower  
 Were the clear bells ringing,  
 When a maiden sat in her lonely bower  
 Sadly and lowly singing ;  
 And thus she sang, that maiden fair  
 (Of the soft blue eyes and the long light hair.

This hand hath oft been held by one  
 Who now is far away ;  
 And here I sit and sigh alone  
 Through all the weary day :  
 Oh when will he I love return ?  
 And when shall I forget to mourn ?

Along the dark and dizzy path  
 Ambition madly runs,  
 'Tis there they say his course he hath,  
 And therefore love he shuns ;  
 Oh fame and honour crown his brow,  
 For so he would be with me now.

In the grey church tower  
 Kept the clear bells ringing,  
 When a bounding step in that lonely bower  
 Broke on the maiden singing ;  
 She turned, she saw ; oh happy fair !  
 For her love who loved her so well was there.

*Lucifer.* And we might trust these youths and maidens  
 fair,

The world was made for nothing but love, love.  
 Now I think it was made most to be burned.

*Festus.* The night is glooming on us. It is the hour  
 When lovers will speak lowly, for the sake  
 Of being nigh each other ; and when love  
 Shoots up the eye, like morning on the east,  
 Making amends for the long northern night  
 They passed, ere either knew the other loved ;  
 The hour of hearts ! Say grey-beards what they please,  
 The heart of age is like an emptied wine-cup ;  
 Its life lies in a heel-tap : how can age judge ?  
 'Twere a waste of time to ask how they wasted theirs ;  
 But while the blood is bright, breath sweet, skin smooth,  
 And limbs all made to minister delight ;  
 Ere yet we have shed our locks, like trees their leaves,  
 And we stand staring bare into the air ;

He is a fool who is not for love and beauty.  
 It is I, the young, to the young speak. I am of them ;  
 And always shall be. What are years to me ?  
 You traitor years, that fang the hands ye have licked,  
 Vicelike ; henceforth your venom-sacs are gone.  
 I have conquered. Ye shall perish : yea, shall fall  
 Like birdlets beaten by some resistless storm  
 'Gainst a dead wall, dead. I pity ye, that such  
 Mean things should have raised, in man, or hope or fear ;  
 Those Titans of the heart that fight at heaven,  
 And sleep, by fits, on fire, whose slightest stir's  
 An earthquake. I am bound and blessed to youth.  
 None but the brave and beautiful can love.  
 Oh give me to the young, the fair, the free,  
 The brave, who would breast a rushing, burning world  
 Which came between him and his heart's delight.  
 Mad must I be, and what's the world ? Like mad  
 For itself. And I to myself am all things, too.  
 If my heart thundered would the world rock ? Well  
 Then let the mad world fight its shadow down.  
 Soon there may be nor sun, nor world, nor shadow.  
 But thou, my blood, my bright red running soul,  
 Rejoice thou, like a river in thy rapids.  
 Rejoice, thou wilt never pale with age, nor thin ;  
 But in thy full dark beauty, vein by vein  
 Serpent-wise, me encircling, shalt, to the end,  
 Throb, bubble, sparkle, laugh, and leap along.  
 Make merry, heart, while the holidays shall last.  
 Better than daily dwine, break sharp with life ;  
 Like a stag, sunstruck, top thy bounds, and die.  
 Heart, I could tear thee out, thou fool, thou fool ;  
 And strip thee into shreds upon the wind.  
 What have I done that thou shouldst maze me thus ?

*Lucifer.* Let us away ; we have had enough of hearts.

*Festus.* Oh for the young heart like a fountain playing,  
 Flinging its bright fresh feelings up to the skies  
 It loves and strives to reach ; strives, loves in vain.  
 It is of earth, and never meant for heaven,  
 Let us love both and die. The sphinx-like heart  
 Loathes life the moment that life's riddle is read.  
 The knot of our existence solved, all things  
 Loose-ended lie, and useless. Life is had,  
 And lo ! we sigh, and say, can this be all ?  
 It is not what we thought ; it is very well,  
 But we want something more. There is but death.  
 And when we have said and seen, done, had, enjoyed  
 And suffered, maybe, all we have wished, or feared,  
 From fame to ruin, and from love to loathing,  
 There can come but one more change—try it—death.  
 Oh it is great to feel that nought of earth,

Hope, love, nor dread, nor care for what's to come,  
 Can check the royal lavishment of life;  
 But, like a streamer strown upon the wind,  
 We fling our souls to fate and to the future.  
 For to die young is youth's divinest gift;  
 To pass from one world fresh into another,  
 Ere change hath lost the charm of soft regret;  
 And feel the immortal impulse from within  
 Which makes the coming, life, cry alway, on!  
 And follow it while strong, is heaven's last mercy.  
 There is a fire-fly in the south, but shines  
 When on the wing. So is't with mind. When once  
 We rest, we darken. On! saith God to the soul,  
 As unto the earth for ever. On it goes,  
 A rejoicing native of the infinite,  
 As is a bird, of air; an orb, of heaven.

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## XI.

That æry lodestone, operant still,  
 The love of boundless knowledge, leads us down  
 Deeplier than ever leadline went, to search  
 The central rayless light we have within,  
 And learn, that, touched albeit all mysteries, traced  
 Orb-founding theories sagest, handled fire  
 Deftliest, unfit, as discontent, to abide  
 Longwhile by nature's hearth, 'twere better seek  
 Our proper good in act. Such light to love,  
 To hope for, strive for, live for, as best shows  
 Our Maker, fellow labourer for man's good,  
 Working, within us charitably; and shows,  
 To souls, high aimed, who others claim to serve  
 Supremely, they themselves need, lowliest rule,  
 Life makes most blessed. Even science finds in God  
 Its ultimate form, the unknown; all utmost truth  
 To inmost faith, responds; all heavens externe.  
 Arched, sphere o'er sphere conformably, to soul's  
 Interior lines. It is from research like this,  
 True aspiration riseth.

*Earth—The Centre.*

## LUCIFER and FESTUS.

*Lucifer.* Behold us in the fire-crypts of the world;  
 Through seas and buried mountains, tomb-like tracts  
 Fit to receive Death's skeleton when he is dead;  
 Through earthquakes and the once proud structured bones  
 Of earthquake-swallowed cities, have we wormed,

Down to fire's ever-burning forge, whence breathes  
 That fluent life-heat, penetrative, which clothes  
 Itself in lightnings, scaping hence through air,  
 And pierces to the last and loftiest pore  
 Of earth's snow-mantled mountains. In these vaults  
 Are hidden the archives of the universe.  
 There screened, in awful and omnipotent ease,  
 Nature, the delegate of God, brings forth  
 Her everlasting elements; and here,  
 The reverend ashes of all ages gone  
 See, finally inurned.

*Festus.* All solid now  
 Was fluid once, air, water, fire, or some  
 Vast, permeant, element; communal, all in one;  
 As in this focal, world-evolving heat;  
 Moisture all mothering; or the vacuous power  
 We are based on, I must deem.

*Lucifer.* The original  
 Of all things, all existence being one  
 Derivative whole, is one. The differences  
 Seen, show diverse but to the finite mind.

*Festus.* This marble-walled immensity, overroofed  
 With pendant mountains glittering, awes my soul.

*Lucifer.* Here mayst thou lay thine hand on nature's  
 heart,  
 And feel its thousand yearèd throbbings beat,  
 As through a sea-strait, till to beat, it cease.  
 High overhead, and deep below our feet,  
 The sea's broad thunder booms, scarce heard; bowed round,  
 Yon arches, like to suspended continents  
 Of starry matter burning inwardly, stand:  
 Hard by, earth's gleaming axle sleeps, unmoved,  
 All movement centering.

*Festus.* Age, here, on age  
 Lie heaped like withered leaves. And must it end?

*Lucifer.* All here hath holden fellowship with gods,  
 With eldest time and primal matter, space,  
 Stars, air, and all inherent fire, the abyss  
 Unluminous, chaos, night. These rocks retain  
 Proof of those times, earth's ancient youth, when she  
 With heaven had holy bridals; royal gods,  
 If turbulent, combative, discontent, nathless  
 Their bright, immortal issue; when, too, lived,  
 Prehuman and heroic, the broad-eyed race,  
 Whose science, as these rocks the seas sustain,  
 Hath formed the base of the world's fluctuous lore;  
 When, too, by mountainous travail, human thought  
 Sought to obtain the untouched heavens, by right  
 Of lineal virtue; when the artful powers,  
 Forecounsel and experience, by meet aid

Of wisdom, teachers of all social good,  
 With godhead strove ; and gloriously they failed ;  
 In failure half successful ; when even men's  
 Minds were as continents vast, and not, as now,  
 Seed-plots minute, with acres, here and there,  
 Of brains untilled.

*Festus.*                      Minds still which know by proof  
 What those could but assume, that all these rocks,  
 Hand-wrought of One, these solid fires ; the air  
 Nebulous, commixed with starry spore, and earth's  
 Waters, with unborn continents heavy, all  
 The rude original seen of nature, here,  
 Being ordered, now, informed, all procreant mate  
 Of heaven ; these crude products of matter, once  
 Like firstlings on the axis, altarwise,  
 Laid, of the globe, earth's testimony still stand  
 To her creative God ; who, in the heart  
 Of nethermost darkness, his miraculous name  
 Scores legible, as upon the sun's broad brow,  
 Mid blaze chaotic, and liquescent plains  
 Of ever-seething flame, where sink and rise  
 Alp-blebs of fire, vast, vagrant ; name which reads  
 Perfection infinite in all ways ; all names  
 Other of gods, obliterates.

*Lucifer.*                      How but one ?  
 Each star, canst tell ? may its divinity boast.

*Festus.* God's hand hath scooped the hollow of this  
 world ;  
 His, sole, who all doth, and remembereth all !  
 Or aim, or deed ; nor, like an atomie dropped  
 Of meteoric light, some star, in's lightning rush,  
 Hath brushed off, which is quenched in last night's dew ;  
 Nor as, when fiery monarch, ireful, starts  
 In jewelled arms war-wards, a sudden gem  
 Falls, and, 'neath tramp of shouting hosts, is lost  
 Am I, even I, forgotten. Ere blended, here,  
 As in a bowl, the spherul rudiments lay ;  
 Whence all elaborated in turn, and raised  
 From shining star-seed into embryo orbs  
 And germs gigantic of the universe ;  
 Each mighty change a thought of God, each thought  
 An act substantial of perfective power,  
 Leaving at last prolific earth life-stored  
 With light impregnated, I know right well 'twas planned  
 For me, for man, his favourite. Even here,  
 These blasts that tear tempestuous from the deep ;  
 These throes that rack the centre, nature's wail  
 For her directing lord, this many an age  
 Missed from her midst, these elemental hells,

Conflictive, earth's upheavals, founts of fire,  
 And island vomitings, fail the sense to quench  
 Of divine wardship : nought permitting he,  
 Though for a time self-hidden, and changeless laws,  
 In mutable types, through ever-varying forms,  
 Dispensing, proof of one continuous end,  
 To happen his beloved of harm ; and this  
 As holiest truth I hold. Didst bring me hither,  
 Trusting to lose God's track ?

*Lucifer.* Nay, but to show  
 How things begin to end. Why, then, e'er made ?  
 This ball so rolled and rounded, melts away  
 Even now, to its constituent atoms. See,  
 This weary axis wavers in its end ;  
 It will sometime snap.

*Festus.* Though here were posited  
 All secrets of existence, natural those,  
 These supernatural, dwell not here would I,  
 Not science' founts profoundest even, to drain.  
 I long to know again the fresh green earth,  
 Breeze life-breath'd ; sea, and sacred stars ; and feel  
 In active comity with the world's wide powers.  
 These recollections crowd upon my mind,  
 Like constellations on the evening skies,  
 And will not be forbidden. Oh ! let us leave.

*Lucifer.* Aught that reminds an exile of his home  
 Is surely pleasant. I, friend, am content.

*Festus.* I cannot be content with less than heaven ;  
 Living, and comprehensive of all life.  
 Thee, universal heaven, celestial all ;  
 Thee, sacred seat of intellectual time ;  
 Field of the soul's best wisdom : home of truth,  
 Star-throned ; by whom, and old oracular night,  
 Our spirit compeers in every orb are taught ;  
 Who can but love ? To me, by night, by day,  
 Thou art, thou must be reverend, world-whole sphere !  
 Whether the sun all light thee, or the moon,  
 In clouds embayed, mid astral islets, air  
 With beauty inundate ; or some god-star, sole,  
 As a great drop of light, shed tremulously  
 Out of her full flowing urn ; yea, tearlike, fallen  
 From her, Night's eye, o'er nature's tome, as she  
 Reads, softening so our present fates ; or when  
 In radiant thousands, each star reigns, unshared  
 His royalty, and leaderless, uncontrast  
 With the light their light is lost in, sons of fire,  
 Arch element of the heavens ; thee, even, when storm  
 And rack, our vision from thy threshold bar,  
 More love I, thinking upon the splendid calm

Which bounds the deadly fever of these days,  
 The higher, holier, spiritual heaven wherein  
 Soul, predisposed to expatiate, shall start forth  
 On joy's relapseless course ; and such progress  
 As counts the infinite only in its midst,  
 Felicitously partake. Come, let us rise ;  
 Nay, quit this world, within whose heartstrings still  
 I know me encoiled. The deeplier I descend,  
 The higher rise, the nearer seem I God.

*Lucifer.* It is knowledge only makes thee near to aught,  
 Whence ignorance most eloins. These rocks, which hold  
 Time's cavernous footsteps printed in raw fire  
 Detain thee, then, no more ?

*Festus.* I would be gone.  
 The world hath made such comet-like advance,  
 Lately on science, men may almost hope  
 Before it die of sheer decay, to learn  
 Something about their infancy, as this day  
 I have taught me of earth's original.

*Lucifer.* True ; but me  
 This troubles not.

*Festus.* Were all earth's mountain chains  
 To utter fire at once, what a grand show  
 Of fireworks for our neighbour moon.

*Lucifer.* The passed  
 Hath seen such sights ; and I ; seen grander. Rise !  
 Let us ascend.

*Festus.* But not through the charred throat  
 Of an extinct volcano.

*Lucifer.* This way ; down ;  
 So thread we at once the world-bead.

*Festus.* Haste, away.  
 Life is too brittle, time too brief to waste.

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## XII.

All man's acts,  
 Serious or trivial, all man's thoughts perchance  
 Pass not unmarked of angel eye, or God's.  
 We know in daytime there are stars about us,  
 Just as at night, and name them what and where,  
 By sight of science ; so by faith we know,  
 Though till our night we see them not, that spirits  
 Are round us, and believe heaven may be full  
 Of angels, as of star-motes night's white zone.  
 A brief but solemn parley o'er a grave,  
 Earth's hollow threshold of futurity,  
 Observed by spirit invisible, aptly heads  
 Holiest resolves ; and, be they kept, enough  
 To assure the heart of peace. Each soul must tread  
 His doubt-press solitarily. Time soon fulfilled,  
 Leads to a promised proof of progress gained  
 By spirit on high, late loved, enlightening thus,  
 Premonstrative, our end.

*A Church-Yard.**FESTUS and LUCIFER beside a Tomb.*

*Festus.* It is not God we doubt of : it is one's self.  
 How can the separate soul, and most, if pure,  
 Exist distinct from God ; if perfect not,—  
 As who shall vaunt, even hers ? how re-unite ?  
 Is he the perfect, the defectible, too ?  
 Here, everywhere, the spirit one holy word,  
 Preacheth, in multitudinous tongues ; in birth,  
 Growth, blossom, fruit, collapse of life, and rise  
 Regenerative of being ; the saving truth,  
 Congruous with man's first faith, world-wide, in God  
 And in the soul-adjusting future, shown  
 Recurgent by these grave-sprung flowers. For grant  
 We die, nor nature cherish more man's frame,  
 Than her dead leaflets, still to have lived conform  
 With reason's law, and virtue's fine delights ;  
 To have kept intact the spirit's purity ;  
 To have revered, believed in others ; hoped  
 And suffered for, in pains we would not lack ;  
 The soul's inborn religion, dear to God,  
 And those who nature love ; while but to have dreamed  
 Of one great Being, the absolute good ; who joys,  
 And waits, to impart to spirit, duly affined,  
 Reunion with himself, true bliss ; the just ;  
 The supreme virtue ; whose immense repose,  
 Actful, not idle, while to him vast scope  
 Leaving administrative, to us reserves  
 Deliberate choice ; our fleeting, cloudlike lives,

Of his persistent firmamental soul,  
 Contrast and like ; seems in itself to assure  
 Our being of permanency ; and well nigh proves  
 Not immortality only, but cognate  
 Divinity, that such vast and godlike dreams  
 Man's brain could sanely guest.

*Lucifer.*

How sanely, friend ?

*Festus.* Oh yes, this sense of the infinite, born in man,  
 Cultured or wild, of one sole essence, God,  
 The governing conscience of all spirit, the same,  
 Continuous, his and ours ; salvation seems ;  
 A rock æthereal, this, sky-based, which shows  
 Us, like originate with the eterne of heaven.  
 For, as who the leaflets of the aye-moving plant,  
 Though of proportions delicatest, first eyes,  
 Instinct with circular freedom, even of spheres  
 Suggestive, ultimately, and heaven ; and, awed,  
 Marks, as in preference moved, this frond or that,  
 By some sufficing motive, if to us,  
 Occult ; so shapes mysteriously, through ghost  
 Or natural spirit of earth and air, man's mind  
 As out of self-necessity, to pursue  
 This grandest and most perfect mould of thought,  
 The thought of deity ; man's best good, of all  
 Rich, poor, participable.

*Lucifer.*

Good ; let the world

Work out its mingled fates, closed thus, or thus.  
 'Twere well, not grow too heavenly, all at once.

*Festus.* When life is most about one, power and proof  
 Of human foresight ; some new conquest won  
 By science from the vast unknown ; some gift  
 Of art, which shall outworth a nation's debt,  
 Heirloom of ages, sealed to earth for good ;  
 And through all lands, one smile man's general face  
 Lights up, self-glorifying ; oft, then, I feel  
 Sunkenest in soul, most faltering in the sense  
 Of spiritual reality : and, in turn  
 'Midst base corruption's trophies mazed, as here,  
 And stony tablets dropped from Death's grim tome,  
 Most hopeful, most assured of being.

*Lucifer.*

To see

Nature's sad wreck, on this, life's undercoast,  
 Cast, and to deem still, something, somewhere, 'scapes  
 By salvage, speaks strong faith.

*Festus.*

How is't I love

The spirit of this fair creature, earthening here,  
 If not in nature ?

*Lucifer.*

May it not be, thou lov'st  
 Her memory, less herself ?

*Festus.*

Nay, hear, sweet spirit !

Let years crowd in, and age bow down  
 My bosom to the earth, which gave ;  
 As yon grey, worn out, crumbling stone  
 Dips o'er the grave ;  
 Though passion me no more should thrill,  
 Nor pleasure please, nor beauty move ;  
 Though the heart stiffen, and waxed still,  
 No more make love ;  
 Still, in my breast, like river gold,  
 Imbedded bright, thy love shall lie ;  
 Sun-grains, that with the sands are rolled  
 Of memory.

Still, let me hold what bliss the spirit enjoys  
 Is that thou hopedst here, couldst ne'er forget.

*Lucifer.* It may be that death's dewy slumber cloy's  
 The soul, as yet.

*Festus.* Surely, that soul hath burst the tomb,  
 Long while, enrobed in living light ;  
 Not being accursed, wormlike, to eat the gloom  
 And dust of night.

*Lucifer.* Oh surely life, in sporting on earth, lies  
 Till death share up the rich green sod ;  
 But soul ! if there it lives, or here it dies,  
 Why try ye God ?  
 What should it never smile nor sigh  
 From cheeks or lips but those beneath ?  
 Outweighs not love the world's vast lie,  
 Beats life not death ?

*Festus.* I ask why man should suffer death ?

*Lucifer.* Answer, what right to life hath he ?  
 God gives, and takes away, your breath.  
 What more have ye ?  
 Breath is your life, and life your soul ;  
 Ye have it warm from his kind hands ;  
 Then yield it back to the great Whole,  
 When he demands.  
 Why, deathling, wilt thou long for heaven ?  
 Why seek a bright, but blinding way ?  
 Go, thank thy God that he hath given  
 Night upon day.

*Festus.* It may be but illusion, then, the all  
 Of marvels thou hast shown ?  
 It may be that the wreath-tricked, trailing pall  
 Closes all known ?

*Lucifer.* Go, thank thy God, that thou hast lived ;  
 And ask no more. 'Tis all he gave ;  
 'Tis all he wills, to be believed ;  
 God and the grave.

*Festus.* For thee, God, will I save my heart  
 For thee my nature's honour keep ;

Then, soul and body, all or part,  
 Rest, wake, or sleep.  
 Yet, might it be, a strange desire my breast  
 Hath seized, I know not how ; it is as though  
 A meteor of the night had there sought rest,  
 And burns within me, her to view once more  
 Whose form here lies.

*Lucifer.* In sooth, I saw a light  
 But now, to thee, it may be, invisible,  
 Which showed me here her spirit, close urging on  
 Its moonbeamed path, some sister soul to impress  
 With the arms of fortitude, or widowed heart  
 Perchance, with patience' humbler crest. Perchance,  
 We are like to have enough of that.

*Festus.* There are,  
 Who her help merit and need ; and doubtless have,  
 Should others justly lack.

*Lucifer.* If, once for all  
 To gorge thy passion for the unknown, I show  
 Herself to thee, with clear sight in her own,  
 Blessed home, thou wilt aid me first to other ends  
 More pressantly required.

*Festus.* More than to view  
 Goodness perfected ?

*Lucifer.* Yea, even power assured.

*Festus.* Command. Thou art ambitious for me.

*Lucifer.* Good.  
 The inevitable sequences of things  
 Like an art-ordered torrent, made to amuse,  
 Run themselves dry.

*Festus.* Heaven speed the time with me.  
 The sun of life shall mount the skies no more,  
 It is one eternal setting. My burden is  
 Henceforth, the spirit.

*Lucifer.* Nay, divers quests be ours ;  
 And at the occurrent season each shall claim  
 Of us, due recognition.

*Festus.* Be it. Away !

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## XIII.

In one of earth's  
 Head cities, awaiting this, the effect unknown,  
 Of evil, not, truly, all-wise, we towerlike rise ;  
 With eminent but indifferent eye survey,  
 Subdne, in thought, society, now in all  
 Its greater grades seen. Secret science, since  
 Divert to aims of power mysterious, schemes  
 For freedom, wealth, airs ; war's surcease ; and spread  
 Of mind-light, social virtue. Here the germ  
 Of universal sway, sought from the first,  
 See posited, striking, round an inner world,  
 Its roots intelligible, but not till the end  
 Destined to fruit ; love, friendship, faith, all things  
 Ministrant. Plans all feasible, shadowed out,  
 Of one sublime humanity purified,  
 Warm even the civic air. And shall not God's  
 Own peace crown man pacific ?

*A Metropolis ; Public Place.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER, STUDENT, and OTHERS.

*Festus.* My thoughts go, cloudlike, round the world,  
 nor rest.

I am on fire to realize the fate  
 Which darkly, in the future's depths, thou hast shown ;  
 Or else am with the mightiest folly mocked  
 E'er impud a soul to madness ? How, meanwhile  
 Our ends defer ? Can we for mellowing suns  
 Wait ? When shall earth acknowledge me ?

*Lucifer.*

Not now.

Never, till self-compelled. The time will come.  
 Have patience. It is the blessing of the angels.

*Festus.* Patience ! say slow self-murder.

*Lucifer.*

Wait for what

Is on the wing already, or reach the end  
 As of an aimless lunge i' the empty air.  
 Knowledge, love, power, are thrones thy soul shall sit  
 In order due as promised. Patience, man !  
 We are as yet but minors, both of us.

*Festus.* Of pleasure one has hardly had a glimpse.

*Lucifer.* Each pleasure hastes thee to thine end, and  
 man's.

Each new sought joy, each freshly proven power,  
 But draws the ends of all things like a hood,  
 Around thy fated head the closer. Come.  
 Bethink thee of thy pact.

*Festus.*

I do ; a pact

Where abstinence only serves to quicken pain ;

Indulgence, shorten pleasure. Which to choose,  
To let alone, which, wiser?

*Lucifer.* In them both  
Is reason; but all-wise, man will never be.

*Festus.* Nay, come then, pretty patience. Sand by sand,  
The world is worn away;—the sea hath sapped,  
How oft! earth's vaulted base; times countless whelmed,  
'Neath his abysmal bowl, the mountain tops.  
'Tis but a matter of days. Most greatest things  
Are gradual. Star on star, the heavens fulfil  
Their issue; and truth quickens here the soul,  
Dipped in substantial lightning of the sun  
Spiritual, and with the eternal saving saved,  
By every breath inspired of God. I yield.  
Let us to that near hand: the end, deferred.  
Life to enjoy, not only one must conform  
To the world's laws, but bye-laws, customs, moods.  
What can be done here?

*Lucifer.* Oh, a thousand things  
As well as elsewhere.

*Festus.* True; it is a place  
Where passion, occupation, or reflection,  
May find fit food or field.

*Lucifer.* Take we our ease  
Beside this feathery fountain. It is cool,  
And pleasant; and the people, passing by,  
Fit subjects for twin moralists like us.  
Here, we can speculate freely on policy;  
On social manners, fashions, and the news.  
Now the political aspect of the world  
At present, is most cheerful. To begin,  
Like charity, at home. Out of all wrongs  
The most atrocious; the most righteous ends  
Are happiest wrought.

*Festus.* Ofttimes it chances so.

*Lucifer.* Take of the blood of martyrs, tears of slaves,  
The groans of prisoned patriots, and the sweat  
Wrung from the bones of famine, like parts; add  
The stifled breath of man's free natural thought;  
The tyrant's lies, the curses of the meek;  
Vapour of orphan's sigh, and wail of all  
Whom war hath spoiled, or law first fanged, then gorged;  
The usurpations of the lawful heir,  
The common weal, which comes to its own, all done;  
The treasonous rebellions of the wise;  
The poor man's patient prayers; and let all these  
Simmer some centuries, o'er the slow red fire  
Of human wrath, and there results at last,  
A glorious constitution, and a grand

Totality of nothings ; for what's all  
Weighed with man's destiny ?

*Festus.* Of recipes

Enough. That man's a warful animal, [*Soldiers pass ; music.*  
Glories in gunpowder, and loves parade,  
Prefers them to all things, see present proof.  
Life's but a sword's length at the best.

*Lucifer.* Past doubt.

Bar-iron, duly smelted, rules the world.

*Festus.* How many things want remedying. What  
next ?

*Lucifer.* Well, in this seat of empire, by this head,  
And nucleus of a nation world-famed, sit  
And name your remedies ; for, sick to death  
Well-nigh, and perishing of rank rotting sores,  
That gilded plasters hide, are all these burghs ;  
Huge populous solitudes, where penury pines  
Mid havoc of excess ; while guileful wealth  
Serves, tremblingly, behind the public board,  
Pale want, his stomach stiff from sheer default  
Of exercise, is pressed to join, and thank  
Compulsory charity, interested to give ;  
Or, back to shadowy feasts where all things lack ;  
Save appetite to destroy. What's wanted here ?

*Festus.* Nought but a total change ; true, honest, life,  
Holy and simple ; peace ; a cheerful faith  
In God ; and nothing spent not purely earned.

*Lucifer.* Utopian, I much fear. But look here comes  
A man thou knowest.

*Festus.* I do. Stop, friend, of late  
I have not seen thee. Whither goest thou now ?

*Student.* I am upon my business, and in haste.

*Festus.* Business ! I thought thou wast a simple  
schemer ;

A theorist of most nebulous mark and views ;  
Founder of many imaginary states ;  
And student of all arts impracticable.

*Student.* Mayhap, I am. There is a visionary  
Business, as well as visionary faith.

My nature is more to sympathize with men,  
Than in their actual aims participate.  
What these by traffic strive to attain for themselves,  
I seek, by the hidden mastery, to achieve  
For others. Let but fruit my next thought, —then,  
Bid me compete with states, and watch who wins.

*Festus.* And holdst thou faith in the art alchemic still ?  
Still seekst secluded in the ravenous search  
For gold to verify thine earlier hopes ?

*Student.* Though mingling more with men, my mind is  
yet

Leased to the great invention. I, in sooth,  
 Have all my life been living in a mine,  
 Lancing the world for gold. I have not yet  
 Fingered the right vein. Oh! how oft I wish  
 The time might come again, pert science prates of,  
 When earth's bright veins ran ruddy virgin gold.

*Lucifer.* When next the world's gold melts 'twill run,  
 I fear,

A pretty steep course towards its natural end.

*Student.* Oh! I am not without my moderate hopes.  
 When in earth's first foundation as an orb,  
 Her giant elements held, like god-kings, sway  
 Free, and successive heritage, each his gift  
 Made earth, to mark his long illustrious reign.  
 Air, water, with prolific forms and fair,  
 Their realms made vital; with grain, herb, the mould;  
 With tall trees towering cloudwards, thousand yeared;  
 Fire, with all ore, gem, marble, stained with dyes  
 Stolen from the infant sun, when feeble he lay,  
 In the orient cradled; and that earth might not,  
 Mid the first passion of her golden prime,  
 Exhaust all joy, each power some art arcane  
 Penned for the cherished future; and to Time,  
 Earth's scribe and heaven's remembrancer, consigned  
 The opening of their treasured archives. These,  
 We, who now hold the keys of wisdom, read;  
 Translate the fiery tongues of obelisks;  
 Revive the blackened brain-craft of old scrolls,  
 A score of centuries tombed; light's radiant chords  
 Peel naked to the stars; weigh air, theirs, ours;  
 Count off the sun's vast rudiments, and his brow;  
 With vaporous iron crown; apt compliment  
 To our own stern age. One secret only, still,  
 Of moment, lacks; and this found, earth may rest,  
 And reap unusual joy. It is my main hope.

*Festus.* Were all rich, nothing left but gems and gold,  
 All things less pure, less precious, all beside  
 Were worthless, penniless. But what crowds of things  
 Life hath, more worth than wealth! When, viewed the  
 world,

We mark the mighty ignorance of the mass,  
 In all lands, their huge servitude of mind,  
 And think, what sometime it would be, to see  
 Freedom and wisdom substituted, thought  
 Fails; and the heart faints at the vast concept.

*Student.* Truly; but not for gold, as ore, I slave.  
 As means subservient only to some end,  
 Great and beneficent, world-wide; end I scarce  
 Thus casually can name, but holy, high,  
 And in the face of all earth's worn-out frames

Of civil power, dynastic, popular, all  
Alike effete, right justified.

*Festus.* So? I hear.

*Lucifer.* For this end, gold is needed.

*Festus.* I perceive.

*Student.* For universal liberty, gold, and more,  
Wrongs must be rectified, rights established.

*Festus.* True;

Where'er a wrong exists, a right is quelled;  
And wrongs seem everywhere. Serfs I despise,  
For nations, if so, must so be, by choice.  
Tyrants, or many or one, elect or born,  
I hate. But how will justice-loving time  
Reckon with all the despots, many and mean,  
Who falsify, by weight of brands and chains,  
The balance civil hath over savage life;  
Who knows? That Mercy may be satisfied  
By so much Justice sweeps, with level hand,  
From off the measure's head, we'll hope.

*Lucifer.* Yes, hope.

*Festus.* Hope retributive Mercy may succeed  
Her sterner sister Justice, and aye reign  
In parity with love. For know, while God  
Sits, judging 'mid the heavens, and all things made  
Governs by infinite laws, each several sphere  
Owns yet his special equity. Even on earth,  
A vast invisible seat he hath, like aged  
With the unwandering hills. In every soul's  
Instinct of right; in all just sympathies;  
In every conscience, sensitive to the truth,  
As skies to light; in every innocent heart,  
Whose strings, like angel lyres, are tuned in heaven;  
Built into being, as though its corner-stone,  
Towers, core of rule, this seat; and when, crushed down  
By popular wrong of kings, or tyrannous crime  
Of crowds, man's prayer, to him appealing, steals  
Skywards, a shock convictive through all hearts  
Shoots: and men's eyes, disfilmed, strange sense receive,  
Undreamed of: view, there, in their veriest midst,  
The eternal Presence, throned. His judgments, there,  
Be very sure are executed. His fines  
To the last blood drop paid. Oh may at last  
Earth's Lord to all be merciful; but now,  
Let God be just; 'tis all we need. I hear,  
As faith his gifts recounts, by man misused,  
Heaven's reasonable demands withstood, the groans,  
Like to an earthquake thundering underground,  
That shake, tempestuous, Time's repentant breast.

*Student.* Wait, wait; not long. The Rectifier will  
rise;

A purer and more righteous æra come.  
Deep in earth's caverned heart, self-hidden, I see,  
Her loins with wisdom's silver serpents girt,  
The Nemesis of nations. Stern she sits  
Her monumental throne. The hush of death  
Spreads round her, halo-like. Even Hope, her friend,  
Oft deems her dead. Yet lives she ; live she will.  
She hath a vital secret in her breast,  
As though she nursed a god which scarcely breathes,  
The freedom of the future. To all else  
Superior, in that secret, nought beside  
Heeds she : but hears indifferent o'er her head,  
The ebb, or flow, of empire, and the march  
Of militant generations ; and but smiles,  
And rocks her foot, contemptuous. Not for these  
Moves she, nor is she moved ; nor cares she watch.  
Wordless of joy or woe, say why is she  
Incarcerate ? why abandoned ? why suspect  
Even of the pure ? why in her cell by all  
Her lover kings forgot,—could one who hath eyed  
Her pale and dominant brow, and mounded breast  
Elate with life, nor shuddering shrunk to meet  
That stately stare, ever forget ? Away !  
Name not old wrongs. If wrongs have been, be sure  
Some day will right them. Know, she hath never been  
Save by her own serene assent, exiled  
From the upper earth's face. What then doth she there,  
Darkling in central solitudes ? Alas !  
Of her divine prevision all devoid,  
Unwelcome and unworthy suitors she  
Hath, many an one, who her to rash attempt  
Of empery would entice, and so secure  
Her forfeit royalty ; wicked these nor reck  
God's patience, or her own, prayer-wrung, to abide  
The hour of destiny, and the award of love,  
The liberator, fore-chosen. For when the dew  
Now wet, hath ripened into the thunder-cloud,  
And man's breath made God's lightning, one shall come  
Who, of things passed intolerant, but divine  
In mercifulness, and prompt ere all to free  
The captive, and, to the exiled, home restore,  
Shall ope her sealèd hand ; tear out the spell  
Of silence' self invoked eclipse, for ends  
Then gained ; and give a spear ; her queenly brow,  
Which ne'er hath stooped before, shall sanctify  
With a crown, more holy than the wall-culled wreath  
Obsidional of cities saved ; and, so,  
Lead her compassionate forth with him to head  
Revived, regenerate manhood. Speed it heaven !  
That we the dawn of that great day may see,

If not for all its mightiest outcomes spared.

*Lucifer.* This is the spirit I want to see abroad.  
We two can aid each other. Spread these views.

*Student.* The wise and good wish well to liberty,  
Throughout all lands; but aim to win her cause  
By some bold movement, from the heart of all  
United nations. Generous souls all joy  
To see man's serf, risen up, a prince with God.

*Lucifer.* The movement might be secret, nor its end  
Till finally, divulged.

*Festus.* Be it as ye will.  
Not, e'er, by war.

*Lucifer.* From age to age old Time  
Hath washed his hands in the heart's blood of earth.  
It's rather late to speak against it, now.

*Student.* If without war the world could live one year  
Twere well. Yet fields of death, ye are earth's pride,  
For what is life to freedom? War must be  
While men are what they are; while they have bad  
Passions to be roused up: while ruled by men;  
While all the powers and treasures of a land  
At beck of the ambitious, wrongs may be  
Offered, with insult; yea, while rights are worth  
Maintaining, freedom keeping, or life having,  
So long the sword shall shine.

*Festus.* Yet war shall cease  
All save the heavenly war we wage within.  
What of thy next thought?

*Student.* Ah, the crowning scheme  
I hinted?

*Festus.* Yes, this golden badge; what may it  
Imply, so patently concealed, displayed  
So critically?

*Student.* It means, I have joined myself  
To certain circles of the wise; a new  
Consociate power, intrinsic to all states,  
Self vowed in sacred bonds to holiest ends;  
Who, worshipping one sole Lord in heaven, would choose  
One sole on earth, peace thus ensured; mankind's  
Free brotherhood, and whole unity. To this end  
What want we? Wealth, time, numbers, secrecy.  
For this, all powers subordinate of the earth,  
All social schemes, all frames of government  
Are now essayed, tried, treated with; all wealth  
Sought variously; all wisdom of the passed,  
All faiths that move men's souls, and dominate still;  
Convergent forces, are folded one by one  
Within our politic plan; plan which, at last,  
By virtue of rational necessity, must  
Make sure, God aidant, earth's whole common-weal.

But how this unity to achieve of choice ;  
 And how, by act, inaugurate and complete .  
 This grand concerted good, seems yet a knot  
 Time's wearied fingers work at till they bleed,  
 And baffled races vainly pray for. Such  
 Our failure.

*Lucifer.* Such shall be no more. My plans  
 Are ripening faster than I thought, than need.

*Student.* Wilt come with me and join this lordly host  
 Of brethren, friends of God, to whom pertains  
 The gift of the world's future ?

*Lucifer.* Well, we have plans.  
 Our auricrucian friend could doubtless make  
 His banded brotherhoods well subservient here,  
 To views, but lateliest treated, of our own.

*Festus.* True, if a few, illumined with all truth,  
 Initiate in all wisdom, hidden and open,  
 Armed with all wealth, could but forefit the world  
 For perfect freedom, Man might wish no more  
 Than add to freedom, peace ; and to peace, power.

*Student.* Be ours.

*Festus.* I love the initiates wise ; but doubt  
 If freedom e'er, with wisdom, prove the lot  
 Of all, or most.

*Lucifer.* Hands seem for manacles made :  
 And feet for fetters.

*Student.* Join with us.

*Festus.* I'll think.

I have passed through all the elements of the world ;  
 Sea's depths, air's heights, the central fires, while 'neath  
 My feet antipodal thunders pealed ; round earth,  
 Coast, continent, desert, isle, and fruit-fraught plain,  
 In all their various vastness ; and have viewed  
 Nought venerable in them, of source, nor force,  
 Self-causative or divine ; save vassal powers,  
 Obsequious to the ends designed of God,  
 Cohærent made, and vivified, by laws  
 Inborn with them, imbreathed, nought. Ocean's tides  
 Poured o'er my head, in seas, for ages, never  
 My spirit to meaner faith could disbaptize  
 Than God's most proveable fatherhood of the world,  
 Material, mental, spiritual ; his just  
 Rule of't, and loveful care ; himself the soul's  
 Sole trust, judge, saviour, meed. In this faith firm  
 No tests I dread. And why change faith ? Can aught  
 Than mine be truer ?

*Student.* Change not ; keep all thou canst  
 Of faith. Thus minded thou art most meet to join  
 Our rational rites, and sacred feasts, truth holds ;  
 Orgies divine.

*Festus.* Of God, or nature? Comes  
Of this, a sorrow unfruitful, and woe-filled.  
Her mysteries teem with shrieks of struggling souls,  
Doubt's cavernous darkness, and remorseful fires,  
I'd not endure for worlds. But heaven's bring bliss;  
Light, peace, and soul-joy, such as he the sun,  
Felicitative, instils in all that live.

*Student.* Fear nought, but prove them. Else am I  
losing time.

*Lucifer.* Nay, time is never lost, if friends are made.  
Promise. They all shall aid in our great aim.

*Festus.* I will advise me. And when again we meet—

*Student.* We surely all again meet.

*Lucifer.* Haply not.

For me I am but poor company. Deem me, rather,  
As some returnless meteor, from all ties  
Of amity or obedience loosed, that flings,  
Careless, his starry store mid space's fields;  
Nor, in revisited spheres, dreams e'er to reap  
The harvest of his hand. But, touching gold  
I have a secret I would fain impart  
To one who would make right use of it. Now, mark.  
There are fifty elements, chemists say, and more.  
Get, then, these fifty principles, or what not.  
Mix up together: put to the question, all.  
Teaze well with vapour, fire; much triturate.  
Add the right quantity of lunar rays.  
Boil whole, and let it cool; and watch what comes.

*Student.* Thrice greatest Hermes! but it must be. Yes!  
I'll go and get them; good day,—instantly.

*Lucifer.* He'll be astonished probably.

*Festus.* He will;

In any issue of the experiment.  
The nostrum may perhaps explode, and—

*Lucifer.* Nonsense.

*Festus.* There needs no satire on men's rage for gold,  
Their nature is the best; and best excuse.  
Some news seems stirring.

*Lucifer.* One of Saturn's moons,  
I heard, had flown on his face, and blinded him.  
It was also said, in circles I, at times,  
Enter, his outer ring was falling off.  
If I should find, I'll keep it. It might fit  
A little finger such as mine. I doubt  
Poor Saturn's breaking up. But for these news;  
Some one perhaps has lit on a new vein  
Of stars in the far void, or made out at last,  
The circulation of the light; or what  
Think'st thou?

*Festus.* I know not. Ask!

*Lucifer.* Sir, what's the news?

*Passer-by.* The news are good news, being none at all.

*Lucifer.* Your goodness, sir, I deem of like extent.  
We heard the Great Bear was confined of twins.

*Stranger.* It is not unlikely; stars do propagate.

*Festus.* And so much for civility and news.  
This city is one of the world's social poles.  
Round which events revolve; here, dial-like,  
Time makes no movement but is registered.

*Lucifer.* Yon gaudy equipage! hast ever seen  
A drowning dragon-fly, floating down a brook,  
Topping the sunny ripples as they rise;  
Till, in some ambushed eddy, it is sucked down,  
By something underneath? Thus with the rich!  
Their gilding makes their death conspicuous.

*Festus.* This man is nobly rich, that, nobly poor;  
These, the reverse. Rank makes no difference.

*Lucifer.* The poor may die in swarms, unheeded. They  
But swell the mass of columned ciphers earth  
Runs up without a thought. Oh wretched poor,  
Woe-bowed, thank God for something, though but this,  
He fire, ye ashes!

*Festus.* Thou art surely mad.

*Lucifer.* I meant to moralize. I cannot see  
A crowd, and not think on the fate of man;  
Olinging to error, as a dormant bat  
To a dead bough. Well, 'tis his own affair.

*Festus.* All homilies, on the sorts and lot of men,  
Are vain and wearisome. I desire to know  
No more of human nature. As it is,  
I honour it, and hate it. Let that do.

*Lucifer.* Here is a statue to some mighty man,  
Who beat his name on the drum of the world's ear,  
Till it was stupefied; and, I suppose,  
Not knowing what it was about, reared up  
This marble mockery of mortality;  
Which shall outlive the memory of the man,  
And all like him, who water earth with blood,  
And sow with bones, or any good he did,  
As eagles, gnats. But failures why indict?  
Why carp at insect sins, or crumb-like crimes?  
The world, the great imposture, still succeeds;  
Still, in Titanic immortality, writhes  
Beneath the burning mountain of its sins.

*Festus.* There's an old adage about sin and some one..  
The world is not exactly what I thought it,  
But pretty nearly so; and after all,  
It is not so bad as good men make it out,  
Nor such a hopeless wretch.

*Lucifer.* For all the world

Not I would slander it. Dear world, thou art  
Of all things under heaven by me most loved ;  
The most consistent, the least fallible.

Believe me ever thine affectionate  
Lucifer. P.S. Sweet, remember me !

*Festus.* Wilt go to the cathedral ?

*Lucifer.*

No, indeed ;

I have just confessed.

*Festus.* Well, to the concert, then ?

*Lucifer.* Some fifteen hundred thousand million years  
Have passed since last I heard a chorus. How ?  
In sooth, can I time calculate ? æras none  
Are in the eternal. Time is as the body ;  
Eternity, the spirit, of existence.

*Festus.* That would I learn and prove.

*Lucifer.*

The finite soul

Can never learn the infinite, nor may be  
Informed by it, unaided.

*Festus.*

Be it so.

What shall we do ?

*Lucifer.* I put myself in your hands.

*Festus.* Wilt go on 'Change ?

*Lucifer.*

I rarely speculate.

Steady receipts are mostly to my taste.

*Festus.* But something must be done to pass the time.

*Lucifer.* Let us, then, pass all time.

*Festus.* Good ! pass ; but how ?

*Lucifer.* I have the power to make thy spirit free  
Of its poor frame of flesh, yet not by death ;  
And reunite them afterwards. Wilt thou, think,  
Entrust thyself to me ?

*Festus.*

In God I trust,

And in his word of safety. Have thy will.

Where shall it be effected ?

*Lucifer.*

Here and now.

Recline thou calmly upon yon marble slab,  
As though asleep. The world will miss thee not ;  
Its complement is perfect. I will mind,  
That no impertinent meddler troubles there,  
Thy tranced frame. The brain shall cease its life  
Engrossing business ; and the living blood,  
The wine of life, which maketh drunk the soul,  
Sleep in the sacred vessels of the heart.  
Three steps the sun hath taken from his throne,  
Already downwards, and ere he hath gone,  
Who calmeth tempests with his mighty light,  
We will return ; and until then, the bright rain  
Of yonder fountain fails not.

*Festus.*

Thus be it.

Come ; we are wasting moments here that now

Belong, of right, to immortality,  
And to another world.

*Lucifer.* Prepare!—

*Festus.* And thou?

*Lucifer.* I vanish altogether.

*Festus.* Excellent!

*Lucifer.* Body and spirit part!—

#### XIV.

Even while a star  
Might twinkle twice, or calm, retiring sea,  
Irresolute yet to leave, his moonlit kiss  
Shimmering repeat upon the impassive shore,  
The arch-fiend and youth, bound skyward, soaring hold  
Darkly, commune, like twilight and midnight,  
Of being and things to be, 'mid interspace  
Of worlds. The angelic fall is touched on. Souls—  
Imperfect, mixed, not seeing how deity could,  
Pure spirit, by act of will aught earthy, gross  
Frame; nor ill's source, end, understand; mistaught  
By adulterate truth which poisons more than pure  
Falsehood, hears how, of angels made, not God  
Who would not with the earthy soil his hand, our orb  
Had all its parts constituent cast by palms  
Depute, tale told to mislead perchance. Yet who  
Heaven granting place and means of penitence,  
Irrestorable shall name the angelic race?  
Who fiction blame, mother of fairest hope?

#### *The Interstellar Space.*

#### FESTUS and LUCIFER.

*Festus.* Where, where am I?

*Lucifer.* We are in space and time, just as we were  
Some half a second since; where wouldst thou be?

*Festus.* I would be in eternity and heaven;  
The spirit, and the spirit made blessed, of all  
Existence.

*Lucifer.* And thou shalt be, and shalt pass  
All secondary nature; all the rules  
And the results of time. Upon thy spirit  
These things shall act no more; their hand shall be  
Withered upon thee; in thee they shall cease,  
Like lightnings in the deadening sea. Not now.  
We have worlds to go through first. But see, just turn  
Thy face, see earth.

*Festus.* How beauteous, brighter thrice  
Than e'er our lamp to man; just mean 'twixt sun  
And moon, its mighty members, sea and land,  
Shining, in revelry of light.

*Lucifer.* Cleared now,

All atmosphere terrene, and meteor zones,  
 Into this darkening azure, deeper aye  
 At every breath, where reigns eternal night,  
 Haste we ; thy longings shall be satiate soon.

*Festus.* Ah ! many have been my longings, many and  
 deep,  
 To learn the mysteries of creation ; things  
 Not published on earth's surface.

*Lucifer.* Such as,—say !

*Festus.* As thou didst promise me to unfold—and now  
 Our time, and this vast progress, seeming smooth,  
 Continuous, e'er unsummed, converse invites.

*Lucifer.* Speak confidently.

*Festus.* Before man's fall I'd know  
 How was't the angels fell ?

*Lucifer.* Nor all by one  
 Revolt, nor one decline.

*Festus.* Say how.

*Lucifer.* Time was,  
 When God, one, sole, in ancients' eterne,  
 In essence, inconceivable, all extent  
 A luminous fulness filling, willed to make ;  
 Withdrew a portion of his essence ; breathed  
 The angels into being ; and in that space,  
 Girt by the infinite, the world became ;  
 Near to him, spirit, life ; matter, last of all,  
 And farthest from him ; willed, still. With this rose  
 The evil of life create, all possible sin.  
 The happy angels, to enlarge God's reign  
 Thinking, besought his leave to make a world,  
 From matter's vast residuous mass ;—time was,  
 Earth beamed heaven's youngest orb—which granted, they,  
 Armed with imputed deity, began  
 Instant the work orbific ; fire and all  
 The elements freed, the land from sea demarked,  
 Rock igneous from aquatic, clay from ooze ;  
 The continents made, the isles, the mountains, streams,  
 Lakes, fountains, plains, tree, herb and flower, all life  
 Vegetive, in fine, and brutish ; all that wings  
 Air, or swims sea, or treads, four-footed, earth ;  
 Or creeps, or glides. These giants made, these elves,  
 Apes, pygmies, such, the tall indignant cranes,  
 Angered by broken treaties, drave and drowned  
 In sea-pools, first of victories hight marine.  
 Those, CEmim and Zamzummim of old writ ;  
 And those Hrymthursar called, who norwards held  
 Frore Jotunheim, fleeing oft at gods and men ;  
 Vain rivals of one heaven-planned shape, of man  
 By God in just majestic medium made.  
 And this, accepted, they with all gifts decked.

God taking thought, himself, of sun and star,—  
With whom to think indeed is to create,—  
He, to the formative angels gave the world  
They had thus wrought out of chaos, and adorned  
With every living miracle, and man  
As head and end of all its dignities,  
In delegate royalty to rule. Thus earth,  
Thine earth, embraced of heaven, and core of space,  
Was plenished, furnished, finished. The angels now  
Longing to instruct man's mind, a chosen band,  
Out of their fair fraternity, depute  
Who straight ascending, quit for heaven. So all,  
Bright and more bright, while starward they progressed,  
And touched the invisible threshold of the skies,  
These angels grew ; till as they neared the seat  
Where, close below the throne, bright Nature sits,  
Perpetual maid, perpetual mother-bride ;  
Sits, gladdening in her splendid offspring, spread  
Through space, star-spirits of seed divine, blessed heirs  
Of deity : sits, serene ;—they, pondering, paused,  
Who seemed a constellation, all of suns,  
Tempting the zenith. Here, their quest resigned  
To God's sole will, 'twas here, accordant Fate  
The predetermined boon they asked, conveyed,  
Due powers of God to perfect, that they loved ;  
And more, he, hearkening to such fervent prayer,  
Grants ; but ere yet dismissed, to them, to all  
In heaven assembled, speaks thus : ' Spirits divine,  
Immortals, hear ; go rule each one his lot,  
Self-sought, of grace appointed. To all tribes  
Of men shall prophets speak, and holiest souls  
Heaven-seeking ; heed they be of you truth taught.  
So teach them, that however with faith and truth  
Inspired, they serve God only ; reverence due  
Pay you, pay all ; but adoration sole  
To him who all things made and sole, can save.'  
Angels and spirit-hosts of prehuman strain,  
Levies of light divine innumerable, rapt  
All, sate in still assent, until one soul,  
Interpretant of heaven, and mind create,  
Tuneful and luminous as a singing star,  
Stepped into light, and in the immarbled ear  
Of the convergent infinite, sang to God  
Larklike, his lone lay, gratulant, worshipful  
Of him All-Wise. A cherub-choir the same  
In stateliest revolution, traced, truth-taught,  
Of power project through all effluxive spheres,  
Returning fined, exalted, perfected,  
In a perduring emblem all the heavens  
Still study, and with their centre-searching eyes.

These things, though wholly comprehending not,  
Things passed, things coming, God the angels showed ;  
Whereat they trembled, and were troubled. Some,  
In place of proffering lowliest praise to God,  
And holiest thanks for leave to do his will,  
In those harmonious lauds the hosts had sung,  
Pleased with their works, cried, These created we.  
Sudden, the stars stood silent. Every sphere  
Ceased its divine accord. The sun paled. All,  
That proud presumptuous vaunt, shuddered to hear.  
Divisions reigned. There were, who Godwards kept  
Due loyalty ; and these withdrew to heaven,  
The Angel of Salvation, Phanuel pure ;  
Sun-ruling Ouriel, Luniel, and the rest,  
Peers of the fallen, once, and holy seven,  
Supplanted, round the throne, their brethren. These,  
For some were more sin-tainted, others less ;  
Earthwards rewinging, in prospective pride  
Enriched it thousand-fold with all delights.  
For men they sowed herb, spice, grain ; planted flower ;  
Fruits luscious grafted on trees ; silver and gold  
Dight earth with, ore, and marble, and every gem ;  
Gems larger lovelier these, than all now known :  
And that smaragdine mirror, their chief toy,  
Which all the angels wrought, each gifting it  
With some unique perfection, after owned  
By Israel's wisest, who the tongues of bird,  
Brute, angel, men, all, knew ; and who therein  
Looking, the wished-for passed, of any age,  
Beheld apparent, as in the instant fact ;—  
And when, solicitous of the future, he  
Had breathed thereon, with the evanishing reek  
From its talismanic disk, limned clear, he saw,  
And all the coming. conned. For men they chose  
The sites of cities, after, seats of power,  
Wealth, law, religion, learning, freedom ; one,  
The city of the dead, men for themselves  
Founded in ominous haste, and fast bestrewed  
With skeleton foliage of the tree of life.  
God made man free. He fell. His freedom seen,  
The angels asked allegiance of man's race.  
And while some mixed with carnal follies drift  
Hellwards, on storms of passionate covetise ;  
By rank and vile inventions, to man's ill,  
Earn othersome God's wrath ; no few through pride  
In their first formative privileges ; in thought  
Reigning triumphant, independent gods,  
O'er men, shared sept and tribe among them ; each,  
Launched on his own wild will ; and thus they ceased,  
Those once most virtuous angels, that pure choice,

## FESTUS.

And grateful excellence they first had, to own;  
 Seeking at first their names, each to his clan  
 To magnify, and so become, by aid  
 Of mean, or monstrous, miracle, their gods;  
 In lieu of teaching men, the One Supreme  
 To worship, God. Fell many an angel thus.

The fall is universal in all spheres.  
 For finite spirit, wherever tasked to keep  
 The counsels of divine perfection fails.  
 The starry story of one primal pair,  
 Twin pillars to the portals of life's fane,  
 Or free-born deities, free as stars are fixed,  
 And the celestial serpent, sun-conceived,  
 Invader of heaven's annual paradise,  
 Wants not, where'er is life; but graven in rocks,  
 Rude missals of millennial patriarchs,  
 Incised in arrowy Zend, on tabled clay—  
 On palm soil penned, or purple pulp of flowers  
 Illumed with every literal grace, or writ  
 On virgin vellum rose-gilded and perfumed,  
 Shrined in the bosom of some cloistered saint,  
 The same sad tale perpetually commands

The astral annals of the universe.  
 A separate interest 'twixt themselves and God  
 Insinuate once, like conflicts 'mong themselves,  
 And schemes of empire basely politic, sprang.  
 One name of God each took, or masculine  
 Or feminine, deity having justly both  
 Who Father is, and bringer-forth of all;  
 Some title of divinity, none save God  
 Could equitably assume, that so they, vain,  
 Might, as lords substitute, the rights receive  
 Due to the alone Eternal, and his name  
 Blot from the hearts and memories of mankind.  
 Such were Baal Nemim, Lord of heaven, whom old  
 Phœnicia worshipped; such too, league-invoked  
 In Syria as the lord of waters, he  
 Whose covenant witness was the e'erlasting well;  
 He, such, by Nile, Hephaistos, father of fire;  
 Aurnazd or Ilus, such; who when he had bade  
 The Persian bow before his so-called throne,  
 The sun, and claimed, phantastic, to have made  
 Kspendermad, earth's fair tutelard, bright Khourdad,  
 And all the seven great angels, lit the stars,  
 Father himself of light; his strength reserved,  
 So feigned he to his prophet, for that strife  
 Final and all composing, 'gainst his power  
 I name not, lord of evil, but in Yezd  
 Prudentially still worshipped, from the world  
 Routed, to be, with three-fold thunder fires,

As chiselled glorious on the Assyrian slab ;  
Vain boasters all these mock divinities ; such  
Whom Asian tribes hailed, dove-born, mother of heaven,  
And 'mong their mingled gods the Nasairÿ claimed,  
Lady of light ; those who in sequent years  
In the holy and lovely island of the west,  
As lords of light, of fate, of wealth, of power,  
Gifts, glories were adored ; such, latelier known,  
Mid deeps Pacific, isled, Mōooi, stretched  
Full length, gigantic shorer-up of earth ;  
High title his, Sustainer of the world.  
But soon in angel breasts, ill passions bred,  
And multiplied to wrongs ; developed ill  
Evolved more perfect sin, till, frantic stricken,  
Men cursed their benefactors, cursed and scorned.  
These, fabling of the future, bade their seers  
Read signs in moving spheres, coin chanted lies  
Which, doubly feigned, deceivers self-deceived,  
From tripod trolled, or maundered from dim shrines,  
And brazen idols, inwardly excavate,  
Whereby false faith, or rich voluptuous fraud,  
Might in the murk of night be satiate. Thus,  
Contentious 'mong themselves who most should reap  
From man's credulity, all where triumphed wrong.  
Oppression followed rivalry ; full soon  
Symbols and signs of terror were, in place  
Of love, God's own and holiest title, ta'en ;  
And the divine to finite passion changed.  
Then first the primal lamb whom spring's warm breeze,  
Its pearly flowers and brooklets bubbling clear,  
Welcome, newborn, 'neath sign connate in heaven ;  
Next, human victims bled ; and passed the babe  
Through baptistry of blood or fire, to peace.  
Such offerings, loathed by heaven ; while stormiest wars,—  
Each striving most to widen his domain,  
Propelling his adorers to invade,  
Root out, and ruin all of faith opposed,—  
Angel with angel waged, and god 'gainst god.  
The heavens were rent with lightnings, and the fields  
Of interjacent space, as the high powers,  
Now heated to malignity, oft closed  
In thunderous conflict, till the fire breath'd hills  
Grew iced with fear ; and quaking earth beneath  
Reeked with the gore of brethren, brethren slain.  
So, while 'gainst heathen, heathen, kin 'gainst kin  
Streamed foe-wise in embattled war-waves ; mowed,  
With scythed cars, earth's man-eared crops ; of wealth,  
Peace, culture, states despoiled ; while every land  
Red rapine reaped, and idiot famine fed ;  
While maid and mother, old and childhood, ate

Grief's heart, and drank the tears of woe, hell, know,  
 Agape for pitiless spirits, and o'er men's wrongs  
 Retaliative, content, groaned deep delight.  
 The angel of the ocean-flowing Nile,  
 And he who Hermon's heights and Lebanon held ;  
 These, who the honours of the plains, and those  
 Who river, sea, or several planet claimed ;  
 And he who, where Hiddekel gulphward darts,  
 Ruled with an absolute crown, for ages, strove,  
 With changeablest success, but changeless woe.  
 So, too, the Median angel and the Greek,  
 Contending, fanes and altars were o'erthrown,  
 Defiled ; and myriads, militant devotees,  
 Through vain ambition of immortals, slain.  
 One thing was common to all nations, woe.  
 Sin, vice and luxury, with their flower-wreathed rods,  
 Ruled and chastised the nations ; race by race,  
 Slaughtered, made, like that cruel tower Shirauz  
 Once held, of bodies breathful, limed with blood,  
 Time's generations, layers of death.

*Festus.*

Not all :—

Or vainly read I earth's recorded passed,  
 Was surely bale, nor with life blight ; to man  
 One sweet exemption, by God's grace, pertained ;  
 One gift diviner than the angels gave,  
 Or took away, by them o'erlooked, but given  
 From heaven's own treasury, all their mutual ire  
 Could ruin not, nor pervert ; love, nought but love ;  
 Parental, filial, conjugal, and divine.  
 Life's armies were recruited still by love ;  
 Fond hearts still grew affection, as fields grain ;  
 Still bloomed and fruited with an inward life,  
 And vintage of delight ; still youthful breasts,  
 Reciprocally fired, imparted joy,  
 Imported rapture ; tenderest converse, still,  
 Sweet as the whisperings of imblossomed trees,  
 Or the low lisps of night's silvery main,  
 Lived on the lips of lovers, then as now,  
 By fount or mead, or wandering, moon beguiled,  
 'Neath tall white cliffs, along the unshadowed shore.

*Lucifer.* In sooth not all was sorrow, nor all sin ;

Many too reckless lived to grieve ; who died  
 Early, died guiltless of much crime ; not all  
 Was ill, then. Not the less, priest, bard, nor mage,  
 From oracles, nor from mystic orgies ; none  
 From secret source, nor patent : ghostliest runes,  
 Nor rolls of birchen bark, with mighty lay  
 Of divination, graven in branchèd signs,  
 Ere dim tradition ; not from tablets rich  
 With Auscan god-lore, and augurial rites

Of volant fowl; from cane, nor palm-leaf, drenched  
With sacred scents, in gilded Pali penned,  
Could whisper to the world one saving spell;  
One sacred secret snatched from jealous heaven;  
That might the house of death illumine; nor aught  
From oracles Sibylline, or of Klarian fane,  
Delphic, of holiest ambiguity, sought;  
Not Rabbin versed in Kabalistic lore,  
Nor echoing daughter of the spirit voice;  
Nor spherul talismans, nor star-graved seals,  
Whose influences, worlds, elements, all pervade  
Could raise in life one soul to peaceful hope,  
Death-passed, of ultimate union with the Light  
Intelligible, of being. Nought hence could save.  
Retrack their steps the angels scorned; nor deigned,  
From holiest truths eliminating all false,  
To help reharmonize with God, man's mind;  
But, as misplaced of purpose, blent their rites,  
That so from mystery mystery still might come,  
And no solution, no salvation, soul  
Sufficing, issue. Virtue, without end  
Was preached of, taught, discussed, belauded, sung;  
But as in theories of best life, men grew  
More skilled and perfect, so in practice worse.  
Nor all philosophies, nor their devotees,  
'Vailed aught; not his, who held the all was God;  
Not his who first from heaven to earth deduced  
Philosophy, and then from earth to heaven  
Retraced the soul's path by immortality;  
Nor his, the sometime slave's, surnamed divine,  
Rich in Egyptian wisdom, and all lore  
Hellenic, who in Academe taught, well pleased,  
The teacher of earth's conqueror, and the hearts  
Of tyrant kings softened by gratitude;  
Not they who, in the Porch, oft dreamed aloud  
Their passionless figment of humanity;  
Nor he who, in the Garden, vainly taught  
Pure pleasure as man's truest mark and end;  
The pleasure of just virtue, one with God's;  
Whose words the hearts corrupt corrupted they  
Aimed but to purify; not he who scorned  
All things, nor he, all doubting; not even they,  
Manly and moderate, honest friends of truth,  
Who all the tenable points of others chose,  
And in one system starred. Nor better fared  
The dubious mind, elsewhere, intent on truth.  
To some, in every land, of soul reborn,  
The gifts pertained of wisdom, life and peace;  
But who the multitudinous mass should teach;  
What truths unfold, and what more shrewd reserve,

The wisest men were doubtfullest, and believed  
 The ultimate indifference of all deeds,  
 All thoughts, all motives, all intents; the best  
 Were erring guides; to most man's life but showed  
 A bridge of groans across a stream of tears.  
 Again the giant world-sphinx, winged with air,  
 Sun-faced, star-maned, tailed with the rolling sea,  
 And breasted as beseems the dam of all;  
 Who nourisheth men and beasts; her riddle reads.  
 And this time, she the knot divine propounds,  
 Of how may man with God be reconciled?  
 Who solves, earns well the purple; and thenceforth,  
 With ominous and curse-worthiest glory, wears  
 His gold-spiked crown. But ah! his end is woe.  
 He to his fate uneyes himself in vain;  
 His tomb is in Time's chasm; and all along,  
 Oracular thunders further quest forefend.  
 In every generation of his kind,  
 Hero, or priest, or bard, or sage, or king,  
 There lives but one can solve.

*Festus.*

And all were dumb!

*Lucifer.* But now that times, of old foretold, drew  
 nigh,

God, the most highest, compassionating the plight  
 Of wretched mortals, thus with reason blessed  
 But with material nature cursed, devoid  
 Of guide infallible, or of standard pure,  
 And ground beneath the crushing rivalries  
 Of disobedient angels, sent on earth  
 His spirit-anointed prophet, soul heaven-born,  
 To preach true knowledge of heaven's Lord, that faith  
 In him alone supreme, he might retrieve  
 To earth's bewildered nations, and the reign  
 O'erthrow of angel-kings who thrall'd the world  
 With their most false misrule; and, in their front,  
 The haughty and presumptuous spirit-chief,  
 Who, one stern family of Semitic seed  
 Choosing, inhibiting brotherhood from the hour  
 When out of Nembrod's wrath, and Assur's land,  
 The idolatrous Chaldees' demoniac fires,  
 And city, itself a realm, of Nin-Evech,  
 He brought the father of the faithful; ruled  
 His wayward chosen in all their wanderings,  
 Rebellions, servitudes; and, by him led forth  
 Lateliest from Goschen, in K'naan now 'bode:  
 He, boasting God to teach, the sole, most high,  
 But elsewhere with the unequal angels linked,  
 Confused of doctrine:—tremble not, but hear.  
 Men cried aloud to God, God, pitying man,  
 Eyes, in sublime compassion, man below;

And mercy, unto the semi-angel, man,  
Flows from the vision. God, long-suffering, acts.

*Festus.* At length we touch the hem of history's robe.

*Lucifer.* This chosen, and all the gentile tribes, like  
gusts

Blew rivalrous from their lips of prophecy.  
What, then was so predicted, could but come.  
Comes now the liberator of soul, the saint  
Of saints; the preacher of forgiven sin;  
The great Pacificator.

*Festus.* Went not wild  
The world with joy?

*Lucifer.* Indeed not.

*Festus.* Was no clash  
Of sword on shield, hence useless but for hive  
Of swarmful bees? No bruit of brazen trump,  
Pealing its joyous requiem o'er dead war?  
No world-wide murmurs of expectant joy,  
Too mighty to be uttered, or repressed,  
From myriads heard? No arch triumphal reared?  
Earth's cities showed no revelry? No domes,  
Nor Parian pillars chapter'd with flame  
Of flower-wreathed lamps, respiring odorous oils?  
No festal halls with floral rainbows spanned,  
And bannered silks with silvery ciphers wrought?  
No gilded car? No team of creamwhite steeds,  
In housings pranked of purple and pearl? Came forth  
No mitred priest, his path of peace to charm  
With benedictions, pouring at his feet  
Long-templed treasures, ransom of a race?  
Their trenchant trade nor smith, nor armourer, ceased?  
Seemed there no universal pause from pain;  
War; now of heaven discountenanced, and God's truce  
Of promise, made perpetual?

*Lucifer.* Since that day  
The world hath made more war than e'en before;  
And this man's followers, mad to prove him prince  
Of peace, have soaked, and still steep, earth in blood.

*Festus.* In grace of such high advent, figured forth,  
By sagest seer, in sacred dance and game,  
Showed not the sphered skies their mysteries, then,  
In honour of God's fatherhood first preached  
Of all men, and man's brotherhood?

*Lucifer.* Nay, thou dreamest.

*Festus.* Glared not the hills with joy-fires? Made the  
kings

No feast imperial? Bled not fountains wine,  
With gush luxurious into marble meres?  
Nor prince nor kingling largesse gave to churl,  
Nor freedom to those bond? No? Loosed not heaven,

When, masked in manhood, earth he dignified  
 By touching with his feet, as once the wave  
 While he to faith a golden pathway showed,—  
 Self-interested, from out its depths, some noon  
 Eclipsing orb, that missioned thus of God  
 Man's spirit to purify, and exalt with proof  
 Of immortality, all earth's souls might learn  
 His entrance into life?

*Lucifer.*                               Thou knowst the tale.  
 So it was not.

*Festus.*       No; thus. Like that lone star  
 Which on the thronèd lady's lap, fresh coined  
 Of God, leapt forth for later worlds, one pure  
 Pale starlet, marked of none but three, through air  
 Glode slowly, and towards a newborn babe that night  
 Of wintry snows, by her who bare, cave-cribbed,  
 'Mid lowing oxen, and adoring herds,  
 Pointed with rayonnant finger, and retired.

*Lucifer.* Foretold or not by stars, or wingèd suns,  
 This seer of seers who humblest lived, his words  
 Well-like profoundly clear, and, deeplier drawn,  
 The purer showing, his entire life one long  
 Perpetual miracle, who to preach the truth  
 And men buy back to true faith in one God,  
 Lived solely, was by treachery base,—inspired  
 Of th' apostate angels colleagued—seized and slain.  
 Thousands revered and loved him; one betrayed.  
 For this, for man's own sake, and for the ills  
 Strife rivalrous 'mong these celestial powers,  
 Caused, God deposed the angels; and, their seals  
 Of sovereignty annulled, they cast, as bidden,  
 All, into black oblivion; even as since  
 In mountain tarn volcanic, throne and crown,  
 Sceptre, and all regalia, golden gauds,  
 The imperial pagan of the west,—though he  
 Justly, to baulk his conquerors base,—implunged;  
 In time to come, some needy fisherman,  
 At close of day, with his last throw, perchance,  
 Shall joyful net, a mass,—if weed-webbed, foul,  
 And once a despot's diadem,—may yet  
 Burnish to brightness fit for holiest shrines.

*Festus.* Thus, too, may it be with the angels, once con-  
                   signed  
 To purifying penance, loth henceforth  
 Even in thought, God's unity, like intense,  
 Like infinite with this onemost heaven, to break.  
 Is there for such no hope? None? Nay, I see  
 Hope's dawn in far-off skies.

*Lucifer.*                               Keen-eyed one, cease.  
 When spirit that springs from Being's eternal fount

Led down through all life's elements, lapse of time  
 And tact of sense concurring, hath at last  
 Its earthlier dross precipitated, and again  
 Bound lightwards, in its course self-clarified,  
 Reflecting God, as ocean in his breast,  
 Booklike, the starry transcript of the skies,  
 Holds, so all virtuous and celestial powers  
 May look for like communion ; but so long  
 As separateness of self, and turbid touch  
 Of world-love or of passion, dim the soul,  
 Never ; be it theirs or thine. But thine, even now,  
 Bears the design of earthliest discontent,  
 Not sacred satisfaction. Now to him  
 Whose soul is saved all things are clear as stars,  
 And to the chosen is sense of safety : this  
 None else, nor cold insurgent heart, nor mind  
 Menial, can compass. It is the way of God,  
 The starry path none tread but spirits heaven-high,  
 Who were of him before all worlds, and are  
 Beloved and saved for ever, while they live.  
 Thou of the world art yet, with motives, means,  
 And ends, as others.

*Festus.* I will no more of it.

*Lucifer.* Oh dream not that. Thou knowest not the  
 depth

Of nature's dark abyss, thyself, nor God.  
 Thou mayst yet rise and fall oft as the sea.

*Festus.* And those thou tell'st of ?

*Lucifer.* Darkness overlong  
 With them, as light with thee o'er strong, may blind  
 Alike the eye.

*Festus.* But I foresee.

*Lucifer.* Forejudge.

*Festus.* How comes it then, being spirit, I see not all  
 As spirit should ?

*Lucifer.* Thou lackest both life and death ;  
 Earth's death, heaven's life. Then wouldst thou see with  
 God,

And know creation's strife in harmony  
 With him, and 'mong its separate parts, how raised,  
 And ordered why.

*Festus.* Death alters not the spirit.

*Lucifer.* Death must be undergone ere understood.

*Festus.* One world is as another. Rest we here.

*Lucifer.* See, thus men compt of destiny. All is  
 chance.

## XV.

Thence to a happier planet—for 'twas his,  
 Whose soul, streamlike, the images of stars  
 Immirrored in its surface, stealing, while  
 At its boldness trembling, knowledge of all spheres  
 Predisciplinary, to reap ; —where, blessed, we meet  
 The spirit just glimpsed the first night of temptation ;  
 Thenceforth the soul's instructress. The prime steps  
 See, of the angel spirit, earth-trained to good ;  
 Immortal, self-perfectible ; whose deep thoughts  
 And lofty musings sow in us the seeds  
 Of higher nature, brighter being. The muse,  
 Especial faculties raised and vivified, there,  
 Hail ; heavenly poesie hail ; all mental powers  
 Outlustring, even as this, eve's dewy star,  
 All worlds. The searchful soul, bent to evoke  
 From all intelligence its especial spell  
 Of union with truth universal, seeks,  
 Earth meditating, and in the future plunged  
 Of mind's advance, our nearest, saddest light.

*Another and a better World.*

## FESTUS, LUCIFER, ANGELA.

*Festus.* Sweetest of worlds ! which, Lucifer, is this ?

*Lucifer.* This is the star of evening and of beauty.

*Festus.* Otherwise Venus. I will stay here.

*Lucifer.*

Nay :

It is but a visit. As the morning star  
 Some know it, too ; but these, a wakeful few.  
 I have no interest in it.

*Festus.* Let us look  
 About us. Heaven, it is, it must be ! Aught  
 So beauteous, must have feeling. Cannot worlds live ?  
 Least things have life : why not things greatest, too ?  
 An atomie is a world, a world an atom,  
 Seen relatively ; and death an act of life.

*Lucifer.* This is a world where every loveliest thing  
 Lasts longest ; where decay lifts never head  
 Above the grossest forms, and matter here,  
 Is all transparent substance ; the flower fades not ;  
 But every eve gives forth a fragrant light ;  
 Till, by degrees, the spirit of each flower  
 Essentially consuming it, the fair frame  
 Refines itself to air ; rejoining thus  
 Its archetype, and preexistent. Here,  
 The beautiful die not ever. Death lies all  
 Adreaming ; he hath nought to do : the babe  
 Plays with his darts. Nought dies but what should die.  
 Here are no earthquakes, storms nor plagues ; no hell

At heart; no floating flood on high. The soil  
 Is ever fresh, and fragrant as a rose;  
 The skies, like one wide rainbow, stand on gold;  
 The clouds are light as roseleaves, and the dew,  
 It is of the tears which stars weep, sweet with joy.  
 The air is softer than a loved one's sigh;  
 The ground is glowing with all priceless ore,  
 And glistening with gems, like a bride's bosom;  
 The trees have silver stems and emerald leaves;  
 The fountains bubble nectar; and the hills  
 Are half alive with light.

*Festus.* The very blush  
 Of being; it is surely too a maiden world,  
 Unmarred by thee. Touch it not, Lucifer.

*Lucifer.* It is too bright to tarnish.

*Festus.* Didst thou fail?

*Lucifer.* I cannot fail. Success with me is nature,  
 I who am cause, means, consequence of ill.  
 Yet is't not heaven.

*Festus.* Oh, no. And would I change  
 Earth, with her desert breast, and wood-wavy brow,  
 Fickle though oft, even fatal, for this round  
 Of delicatest realities? Nay, I love  
 Earth's woods to haunt when the storm bends his bow,  
 And volleys all his arrows off at once;  
 And when the dead brown branch comes crashing close  
 To my feet, to tread it down, because I feel  
 Decay my foe; and not to triumph's worse  
 Than not to win. It is wrong to think on earth;  
 But terror hath a beauty, even as mildness.  
 And I have felt more rapture even on earth  
 When, like a lion, or a day of battle,  
 The storm rose, roared, shook out his shaggy mane,  
 And leapt abroad on the world, and lay down red,  
 Licking himself to sleep, as it got light;  
 Ay, in the cataract-like tread of a crowd,  
 And its irresistible rush, flooding the green,  
 As though it came to doom, than ever I could  
 Feel in this faëry orb of show and shine.  
 I love earth!

*Lucifer.* Thou art mad to dote on earth,  
 When with this sphere of beauty. Nay, conceive.  
 Thou canst not yet enjoy a sensuous world,  
 Refined though ne'er so little o'er thine own,  
 And still wouldst enter heaven. Valhalla's halls,  
 And skulls o'erbrimmed with mead; cities of gold,  
 Cities of silver; temples roofed with light;  
 God-home and glory-land; Elysian plains,  
 Where peace and pleasure, endless, cloudless joy,  
 And ever-ripening bliss, enrapture all;

The Buddhist's blessed Nirvana, half between  
 What is, and what is not; the Chaldee's orbs  
 Of gold, where wons the primal light intense;  
 The high celestial mountains, bright with hues  
 Spiritual of heaven, Brahm loves, and Siva holds,  
 So pure that snow would stain, and dew defile;  
 Where music, and her sister, beauty, dwell,  
 And the waters flow of immortality;  
 The pearly palaces and odorous groves;  
 Forms heavenly, infinite brightness, and of souls  
 The starry transmigrations, they who home  
 By the amber main, believe their lot, past death;  
 The Aztec's burning heaven, where living clouds  
 By warrior souls informed, sweep round the sun  
 Ceaseless; rise, fall, at will; an earth-life now,  
 Or heaven-life had, in turn; whose sword-play makes  
 Lightning, whose voice in battle, thunder, they  
 Warring on high; the Moslem's love-bowers, streams  
 Of wine, and tents palatial, gem illumed;  
 Where dark-eyed houris with the endearing arms  
 White, ever virgin, woo and welcome ye;  
 Eden, where life, toilless, at least, gave man  
 All things to live with, nothing to live for;  
 Were, all, too pure for thee. Yet shalt thou be  
 Surely in heaven, ere death unlock the heart.

*Festus.* Lo, here are spirits, denizens of the sphere,  
 I doubt not, fitly fair; and, strange! all seem  
 To love each other.

*Lucifer.* He hath but half a heart  
 Who loves not all.

*Festus.* Speak for me to some angel.  
 See, here is one, a very soul of beauty.  
 Nay, 'tis the Muse. I know her by the lyre  
 Hung on her arm, and eye like fount of fire.

*Muse.* Mortal, approach. I am the holy Muse,  
 Whom earth's best spirits adore; her chosen choose.  
 It is I who imbreathe my soul into the lips  
 Of those great lights whom death nor time eclipse;  
 It is I who wing the loving heart with song,  
 And set its sighs to music on the tongue;  
 It is I who watch, and with high thoughts reward,—  
 For every thing I love that's pure and bright,—  
 The holy aspirings of the youthful bard.  
 'Twas but this morn, with the first wink of light,  
 A sunbeam left the sun; and as it sped,  
 I followed, watched, and listened, what it said:—  
 'Straight from the sun I part; and though have passed  
 Since bidden of God, and in heaven's centre cast,  
 Worlds, ages, dooms, yet I am light to the last.  
 And though, foreseen, the world's air warps our way,

And crops the roses from the cheek of day ;  
As some false friend who holds man's all in trust,  
Oils his decline, and hands him to the dust,  
Yet all our God shall once bend to his will,  
Is sacred, to be loved, or borne with, still ;  
We know not what may be ; we bide what must.  
If such then fate, to speed unwavering on  
My path, be mine ; though fate and fall be one.  
For what's this swift, this bright, but downward being,  
Too burning to be borne, too brief for seeing ?  
What is mine aim, mine end ? Would I expire  
Groveling in common dust, in sea, air, fire ?  
Help avarice pelf to heap, war wreak his ire,  
Or light the loveless to their low desire ?  
No ; but if favouring fate which, urged from God,  
Here vivifies a heaven, and there a clod,  
Grant me but this request, death's pang to assuage,  
'Twould be to perish on the poet's page,  
Where, kissing from his beauty's brow all age,  
Bespelled for ever fair, and wrinkle scorning,  
As when first that brow brake on him like a morning,  
He, with adoring spirit, creates the line  
Which leads, by mortal beauty to divine,  
Man's soul. For this end, earthbound though, I come,  
I'd live, die, go down gladdening, to my doom.'  
It said ; and saw earth ! and one moment more  
Fell bright beside a vine-shadowed cottage door.  
In it came ; glanced above a glowing page  
Where youth foreshortening and forestalling age,  
Weak with the work of thought a boyish bard  
Sate suing night and stars for his reward ;  
The unwrought crownlets which to bards belong,  
And bloom perennial in their sacred song.  
The sunbeam swerved and grew, a breathing, dim,  
For the first time, as it lit and looked on him ;  
His forehead faded, pale his lip, and dry ;  
Hollow his cheek, and fever fed his eye ;  
Doubt-clouds lay round his brain, as on a hill  
Broods the incipient storm, unvoiced ; and still,  
Quick with the thunder thought, and lightning will.  
His clenched hand shook from its more than midnight  
clasp ;  
And his pen fluttered like a wingèd asp ;  
Save that no deadly venom blacked its lips ;  
'Twas his to enlighten life, and not eclipse,  
Nor would he shade one merit owned by other,  
To have a sphere his slave, a god his brother.  
Still sate he, though his lamp sunk : still he strained  
His eyes to work the nightness which remained.  
Vain pain ! he could not make the light he wanted ;

And soon thought's wizard ring gets disenchanted.  
 When earth was dayed, was morrowed ; the first ray  
 Perched on his pen, and diamonded its way ;  
 The sunray that I watched, which, proud to cease  
 Mid some fair line, inspired of love and peace,  
 Died, in the only path it would have trod,  
 Were there as many ways, as worlds, to God ;  
 Died ; in his eye again to live and burn,  
 As nature's glory all to heaven's shall turn,  
 When truth's immortal sunbeams guide his pen,  
 And love his heart who, God-taught, teaches men  
 They may be all they most aspire to be,  
 Their longed-for end, their earliest destiny,  
 Whose aim in life is truth and sanctity.  
 For earth-life is but being's dawning ray ;  
 And hadst thou suns in day as stars in night,  
 And each, of heaven perfective, towards God's day  
 Thy soul brought, still, its highest, truest right  
 Were, luminous, to rejoin his full-sphered light,  
 Before whose face creations pass away,  
 As pass all cloudlets 'fore the steadfast sky,  
 Or as year, time's arrows 'fore eternity.

*Festus.* Thanks, thanks ! With the Muse is always love  
 and light,

And self-sworn loyalty to truth. For know,  
 Poets are all who love, who feel, great truths,  
 And tell them : and the truth of truths is love.  
 There was a time—oh, I remember well !  
 When, like a sea-shell with its sea-born strain,  
 My soul aye rang with music of the lyre ;  
 And my heart shed its lore as leaves their dew—  
 A honey dew, and throve on what it shed.  
 All things I loved ; but song I loved in chief.  
 Imagination is the air of mind ;  
 Judgment its earth and memory its main ;  
 Passion its fire. I was at home in heaven.  
 Swiftlike, I lived above ; once touching earth,  
 The meanest thing might master me : long wings  
 But baffled. Still and still I harped on song.  
 Oh ! to create within the mind is bliss ;  
 And, shaping forth the lofty thought, or lovely,  
 We seek not, need not heaven : and when the thought,  
 Cloudy and shapeless, first forms on the mind,  
 Slow darkening into some gigantic make,  
 How the heart shakes with pride and fear, as heaven  
 Quakes under its own thunder ; or as might,  
 Of old, the mortal mother of a god,  
 When first she saw him lessening up the skies.  
 And I began the toil divine of verse,  
 Which, like a burning bush, doth guest a god.

But this was only wing-flapping—not flight ;  
The pawing of the courser ere he win ;  
Till by degrees, from wrestling with my soul,  
I gathered strength to keep the fleet thoughts fast,  
And made them bless me. Yes, there was a time  
When tomes of ancient song held eye and heart ;  
Were the sole lore I recked of: the great bards  
Of Greece, of Rome, and mine own master land,  
And they who in the holy book are deathless ;  
Men who have vulgarized sublimity ;  
And bought up truth for the nations ; held it whole ;  
Men who have forged gods—uttered—made them pass :  
Sons of the sons of God, who, in olden days,  
Did leave their passionless heaven for earth and woman,  
Brought an immortal to a mortal breast,  
And, rainbowlike the sweet earth clasping, left  
A bright precipitate of soul, which lives  
Ever ; and through the lines of sullen men,  
The dumb array of ages, speaks for all ;  
Flashing by fits, like fire from an enemy's front ;  
Whose thoughts, like bars of sunshine in shut rooms,  
Mid gloom, all glory, win the world to light ;  
Who make their very follies like their souls ;  
And like the young moon with a ragged edge,  
Still, in their imperfection, beautiful ;  
Whose weaknesses are lovely as their strengths,  
Like the white nebulous matter between stars,  
Which, if not light, at least is likeliest light ;  
Men whom we build our love round like an arch  
Of triumph, as they pass us on their way  
To glory, and to immortality ;  
Men whose great thoughts possess us like a passion,  
Through every limb and the whole heart ; whose words  
Haunt us, as eagles haunt the mountain air ;  
Whose thoughts command all coming times and minds,  
As from a tower, a warden ; fix themselves  
Deep in the heart as meteor stones in earth,  
Dropped from some higher sphere ; the words of gods,  
And fragments of the undeemed tongues of heaven ;  
Men who walk up to fame as to a friend,  
Or their own house, which from the wrongful heir  
They have wrested, from the world's hard hand and  
gripe ;  
Men who, like death, all bone but all unarmed,  
Have ta'en the giant world by the throat, and thrown him ;  
And made him swear to maintain their name and fame  
At peril of his life ; who shed great thoughts  
As easily as an oak looseneth its golden leaves  
In a kindly largesse to the soil it grew on ;  
Whose names are ever on the world's broad tongue,

Like sound upon the falling of a force ;  
 Whose words, if wingèd, are with angels' wings ;  
 Who play upon the heart as on a harp,  
 And make our eyes bright as we speak of them ;  
 Whose hearts have a look southwards, and are open  
 To the whole noon of nature ; these I have waked,  
 And wept o'er, night by night ; oft pondering thus :  
 Homer is gone : and where is Jove ? and where  
 The rival cities seven ? His song outlives  
 Time, tower, and god—all that then was, save heaven.

*Muse.* Yea, but the poor perfections of thine earth  
 Shall be as little as nothing to thee here.

*Festus.* God must be happy, who aye makes ; and since  
 Mind's first of things, who makes from mind is blessed  
 O'er men. Thus saith the bard to his work :—I am  
 Thy god, and bid thee live as my God me :  
 Strength of my soul ! thou camest and went'st, sunlike,  
 From morn to eve ; fire-smiling on this heart,  
 Aforetime calm, until by passion's tides,  
 Roused, and ambition's tyrannous gales it rose  
 And dashed about its house all might and mirth,  
 Like ocean's tongue in Staffa's stormy cave.  
 But wert thou fragile as the reed once filched,  
 From heaven, in theft heroic, and with gifts  
 Of world-vast change charged, still I hail thee fraught  
 With fire immortal, deathless as the breath  
 Of God's lips,—every breath a soul.

*Muse.* It is well.  
 Mortal, the Muse is with thee : leave her not.

*Festus.* Once my ambition to another end  
 Stirred, stretched itself, but slept again. I rose  
 And dashed on earth the harp, mine other heart,  
 Which ringing, brake ; its discord ruinous  
 Harmony still ; and coldly I rejoiced  
 No other joy I had, wormlike, to feed  
 Upon my ripe resolve. It might not be :  
 The more I strove against, the more I loved it.

*Lucifer.* Come, let us walk along. So say farewell.

*Festus.* I will not.

*Muse.* No : my greeting is for ever.

*Lucifer.* Well, well, come on !

*Festus.* Oh ! show me that sweet soul  
 Thou brought'st to me the first night that we met.  
 She must be here, where all are good and fair :  
 And thou didst promise me.

*Lucifer.* Is that not she  
 Walking alone, up-looking to thine earth ?  
 For, lo ! it shineth through the mid-day air.

*Festus.* It is, it is !

*Lucifer.* Well, I will come again.  
The more he views, the more 'tween God and him.

*Festus.* Knowest thou me, mine own immortal love?  
How shall I call thee? Say, what mayst thou be!

*Angela.* I am a spirit, Festus; and I love  
Thy spirit, and shall love, when once like mine,  
More than we ever did or can even now.  
Pure spirits are of heaven all heavenly.  
Yet marvel not to meet me in this guise,  
All radiant like a diamond as it is.  
We wander in what way we will through all,  
Or any of these worlds, and wheresoe'er  
We are, there heaven is; there, and here too, God.  
Nor deem still ~~less~~ thou art unwatched on earth.  
Even when I saw thee by the grave, and knew  
I was purely in thy thoughts, 'twas my soul's prayer  
To God, who o'erorders all things in unseen  
Control, and bends to his praise what hates him most  
As what most loves, thou mightst, sometime with me  
Here meet, and quit thy mind of doubts. For here  
Dwell many and wisest angels, many souls  
Who have run pure through earth, or been made pure  
By their salvation since. It is a mart  
Where all the holy spirits of the world  
Effect sweet interchange of knowledge; truth  
Barter for love, for love truth; each enriched.

*Festus.* Thou dost remember me?

*Angela.* Ay, every thought  
And look of love which thou hast lent to me,  
Comes daily through my memory as stars  
Wear through the dark.

*Festus.* And thou art happy, love?

*Angela.* Yes: I am happy when I can do good.

*Festus.* To be good is to do good. Who dwell here?  
Are they all deathless—happy?

*Angela.* All are not:  
Some err, though rarely—slightly. Spirits sin  
Only in thought; and they are of a race  
Higher than thine; have fewer wants and less  
Temptations, more joys, greater powers. They need  
No civil sway; each rules, obeys, himself.  
All as they choose, live; choose but good. Who have  
come  
From earth, or other orb, use the same powers,  
Passions, and purposes, they had ere death;  
Although enlarged and freed, to nobler ends,  
With better means. Here the hard warrior whets  
The sword of truth, and steels his soul against sin.  
The fierce and lawless wills which trooped it over  
His breast; the spearèd desires that overran

The fairest fields of virtue, sleep and lie  
 Like a slain host 'neath snow ; he dyes his hands  
 Deep in the blood of evil passions. Mind !  
 There is no passion evil in itself ;  
 In heaven we shall enjoy all to right ends.  
 There sit the perfect women, perfect men ;  
 Minds which control themselves, hearts which indulge  
 Designs of wondrous goodness, but so far  
 Only as soul extolled to bliss and power  
 Most high sees fit for each, divinely. Here,  
 The statesman makes new laws for growing worlds,  
 Through their forefated ages. Here, the sage  
 Masters all mysteries, more and more, from day  
 To day, watching the thoughts of men and angels  
 Through moral microscopes ; or hails afar,  
 By some vast intellectual instrument,  
 The mighty spirits, good or bad, which range  
 The space of mind ; some spreading death and woe  
 On far off worlds ; some great with good and life.  
 And here the poet, like that wall of fire  
 In ancient song, towers o'er the universe ;  
 Lighting himself, where'er he soars or dives,  
 With his own bright brain : this is the poet's heaven.  
 Here he may realize each form or scene  
 He e'er on earth imagined ; or bid dreams  
 Stand fast, and faëry palaces appear.  
 Here he hath heaven to hear him ; to whose love,  
 Which lent him his whole strength, with mainlike voice,  
 And song he thankful sings as is the wont  
 Of all great spirits and good throughout the world.  
 Oh ! happiest of the happy is the bard !  
 Here, too, some pluck the branch of peace to greet  
 A suffering saint with, and foreshow his flood  
 Of woe hath sunken : this I love to do ;  
 Who, late on Mercy's mission charged, thee heard  
 Now, here ; but wherefore ask not : thou sometime  
 Shalt know, and known, and loving me, approve ;  
 Rejoice in knowing.

*Festus.* Be it, loved one, as thou wilt.

*Angela.* My love, we shall be happy here.

*Festus.* Shall I

Ever come here ?

*Angela.* Thou mayst. I will pray for thee,  
 And watch thee.

*Festus.* Thou wilt have, then, need to weep.  
 This heart must run its orbit. Pardon thou  
 Its many sad deflections. It will return  
 To thee and to the primal goal of heaven.

*Angela.* Practise thy spirit to great thoughts and things,  
 That thou mayst start, when here, from vantage ground.

By ceasing to be little on earth, a soul  
 Effectually, grows here, half boundless, where  
 Knowledge of that we would, in being, ends.  
 Our spirits what there they know and love, of things  
 Divine, here greaten to ; for their final cause  
 Their inmost end, their highest source in us  
 Being God, soul-consciousness of whom is bliss,  
 This, our celestial aptness for high ends ;  
 World-lording will, ceaseless progress of mind,  
 Ambition to do good, the mastery, sought  
 With tears, of mysteries, and the exalting love  
 Of all perfections, virtuous and divine,  
 Our birth, our worth, proves ; and the rational soul's  
 Most choice endowment shows ; whereby, demarked  
 From lower intelligence, and with heavenly life  
 Collate, we test the future as of God,  
 Whose sealed recognizance we embosom here.  
 For his eternal knowledge, rounding time,  
 And all things in it happening, makes the world,  
 To us one vast contingency, to him  
 All certainty appear, whose note of things  
 Their actual being precedes, as being, with us,  
 Its noteableness ; who in himself all cause  
 Or absolute or conditioned holds, and knows  
 Of all his works by him begun, by man  
 Continued, or let lapse, which sole shall end  
 In sanctified perfection. If by us  
 Conceived, accordant with his pure design,  
 O happy we ! our life-leaf beams in heaven's  
 Bright archives ; but time's parable misjudged,  
 Misconstrued wilfully, defiled, distort  
 To ends of him and us unworthy, find  
 We may, to our cost, or blotted out, erased,  
 Or, shrieking, from the eternal volume, torn.  
 Thus, while each fateful only is to himself,  
 We can foretell our future ; we foremake.

*Festus.* Speak to me of the future.

*Angela.* Why alone  
 Of the to come ?

*Festus.* Because I love and dread,  
 As might a vessel laden o'er-deep with gold,  
 To cross a stream upon whose further side  
 Safety allures, but in whose midst is death,  
 The untold pleasures of the life my soul  
 Is richest freighted with.

*Angela.* God's supreme gift,  
 Whereby all beings gauge their high advance  
 In heaven, to perfect joy, is this ; to learn  
 The everlasting future. Less or more,  
 All happy spirits can, as one with him.

The more their power their longing is the less ;  
 Contented with divinity ; but I  
 Am only at his feet, not yet his breast.  
 A natural sadness born, O Festus, born  
 Of the sad passed ; though passed, though sad, still dear ;  
 Clouds yet my vision of eternal things ;  
 And human love yet more than nothing seems.  
 Oh ! speak not of the future. Speak to me  
 Thou, of the passed.

*Festus.* Immortal ! from thine eye  
 Wipe out the tear of time. The gates of hell  
 Are barred upon the passed. Their hold is like  
 The grasp of gravitation. Shall the passed  
 Ever evade the death-clutch of the world ?  
 No, they shall, like two cars, wheel locked in wheel,  
 Roll down together to destruction's depths.  
 Nay, rede me of the future what thou canst,  
 Divine one ! heaven is in the possible.

*Angela.* Oh, once ere now I cast my spirit sight  
 Into the orient future, to preview  
 The features of thy lifelot ; but, alas !  
 I saw what I were fain to have remained  
 Unweeting of for ever. Now, once more,  
 Thou wouldst revive my woe.

*Festus.* Nay, if it grieve thee,  
 I will not wake the future. Let it sleep  
 Till its time come.

*Angela.* Yet with that woe I saw  
 A web of joy was woven for thyself,  
 For me, for many, by the love of God ;  
 Who, granting his own spirit to the form  
 Of divinized humanity, unbuilds  
 The superseded soul, and making all  
 Spirits anew in him, doth make all one.  
 This is the infinite calm which circumscribes  
 All local lifestorms ; this the law of peace  
 Constrains all strife ; the rule of bliss all woe  
 Which disannuls. Haste, haste, thou blessed hour,  
 To the divine fulfilment of the end  
 Of total being.

*Festus.* Thus serenely, speak on ;  
 And with the sequence of my life forearm  
 The soul that is within me. Angel, speak !—

*Angela.* Once at my prayer 'twas given me, as I said,  
 The future to foresee ; and I beheld  
 A vision of thyself begirt with forms—  
 Nay, more than one—of beauty ; though to one  
 Lovely and pure as loving, I thy heart  
 Had trustfully bequeathed ; but sad was this ;  
 And that was blithe of blee ; and that—enough !

I cannot all denote them ; but I know  
Malign I felt at first to see the heart  
I loved, by them usurped. But when I thought  
From these calm heights, of all earth's cares and woes,  
And life's brief paradise, the hour of love,  
And knew it aye a failure, as of old,  
Though a divine experiment, I wept,  
And prayed, and found forgiveness for my fault.  
Seek to them ; choose. They all are in thy life  
Blent, and as elements mingled in the cup  
Creative of thy world. These twain are bound,—  
One, with temptations which the soul divert  
Creature-wards from its Maker, not of need,  
Not wisely, but too oft ; one, with the charms  
If not forbidden, of secret knowledge, hidden  
As harmful, to the spirit that seeks not truth  
For herself sole. This dearest, first and last,  
Shall teach thee perfectness, and guide thy mind  
On earth, from truth to truth, as I from star  
To star unseen, shall have led thee through the skies.  
With her be happy. And as I looked, I found  
Though 'fore each one, successive, as the fates  
Thy spirit did bow ; and none but in herself  
Chastened, than I was happier ; yet in the end  
All formed one family spiritual of love.  
My soul then gladdened, and I knew that joy  
The seal of my salvation. I beheld  
All things rejoice beneath the light of love,  
Which seemed to burn within me, and beam through,  
Lost in the boundless loneliness of God.  
I saw earth's war-scarred countenance sweetly glide  
Into the angel lineaments of peace ;  
And gentlest sorrow dream herself to joy.  
Tears shed on earth were reaped in heaven in smiles,  
And what was sown in sighs was raised in songs.  
Rapt in this vision with ecstatic bliss,  
Myself secure from all external chance,  
As though the one pure atomie of light  
Impounded in the centre of the sun—  
Ere yet the end of all, methought I saw  
Each beauty gathered by the careful hand  
Of the great gatherer who forgetteth none.  
I felt my being brightened and made fit  
For heavenly regions, gladdening in their glee,  
And grieving in their grief ; as, with thine own,  
One blessed fate I viewed involving all,  
One everlasting end. All earthly love  
Consumm'd with thine, I saw, made love divine.  
For as the countless globelets of the dew  
Image each one the sun, so, in the dawn

Of heaven's great day, the seed of God shall shine  
 Each with his golden likeness in his breast.  
 Thus far my vision. May the all-kind God,  
 Who crowns creation with o'erflowing love,  
 Bless it to thee! And wouldst thou further know,  
 Or of the passed, or the calm coming time,  
 Seek yonder sphere serene; for changeless there,  
 In lofty and in lonely light sedate,  
 The sibyl angel sits, star studying;  
 Two only things before her—heaven and earth.  
 Her ask, and she will answer all; nay, show  
 Sometime, if friendliest trust mayhap, prevail,  
 A wider scope of things, than spirit like mine  
 Of heaven's novitiate, can control. And now,  
 By each forebode, and fortified in soul,  
 Retrieve thou the terrene. Endure, enjoy.  
 Who rightly all conditions of life's law  
 Fulfils, from death to happiest deathlessness,  
 Proceeds, divinized. Mayst thou in holy joy,  
 Thy spiritual birthright here reclaimed, aye live!

*Festus.* So shall it be: thy will and my deed, one.  
 I do not fear to die; for though I change  
 The mode of being, I shall ever be.  
 World after world shall fall at my right hand;  
 The glorious future be the passed despised:  
 All now that seemeth bright will soon seem dim,  
 And darker grow, like earth, as we approach it;  
 While I shall stand upon yon heaven which now  
 Hangs over me. If aught can make me seek  
 Other to be than that lost soul I fear me,  
 It is that thou lovest me. Heaven were not heaven  
 Without thee.

*Lucifer.* I am here now. Art thou ready?  
 Let us go.

*Angela.* Well—farewell. It makes me grieve  
 To bid a loved one back to yon false world;  
 To give up even a mortal unto death.  
 Thou wilt forget me soon, or seek to do.

*Festus.* When I forget that the stars shine in air;  
 When I forget that beauty is in stars;  
 When I forget that love with beauty is;  
 Will I forget thee: till then, all things else.  
 Thy love to me was perfect from the first,  
 Even as the rainbow in its native skies:  
 It did not grow; let meaner things mature.

*Angela.* The rainbow dies in heaven and not on earth;  
 But love can never die: from world to world,  
 Up the high wheel of heaven, it lives for aye.  
 Remember that I wait thee, hoping here.

Life is the brief disunion of that nature  
Which hath been one and same in heaven ere now,  
And shall be yet again, renewed by death.  
Come to me, when thou diest !

*Festus.*

I will, I will.

*Angela.* Then, in each other's arms, we will waft  
through space,  
Spirit in spirit, one ; or, grateful, dwell  
Among these immortal groves ; watching new worlds,  
As, like the great thoughts of a Maker-mind,  
They are rounded out of chaos : will be oft,  
On earth with those we have left and love, and help them ;  
For God hath made it lawful for good souls  
To make souls good ; and saints, to help the saintly.  
That thou right soon mayst fold unto thy heart  
The blissful consciousness of separate  
Oneness with God, in whom alone the saved  
Are holy and deathless, shall become, for thee,  
My earliest, earnest, and most constant prayer.  
Oh ! what is dear to creatures of the earth ?  
Life, love, light, liberty ? But dearer far  
Than all, and oh ! an universe more divine,  
The gift, God crowns his chosen with, of heaven's  
Unimageable glory, ere all worlds,  
And after all reserved for those he loves.  
As when the eye first views some Andean chain  
Of shadowy rolling cloud-crag, air-based, height  
On height, in sunny snowsheen, up the skies  
'Spiring, like angels' pinions, when heaven's host  
Self-hushed, God's utterance listens, nor can tell  
Which loftiest, nor which loveliest, be ; as when  
An army awakening with the sun, all hope,  
Starts to its feet, spear answering spear, line, line  
Reundulative ; white plumes, like war-foam, wave  
Far round ; the light of sword-born lightning gleams  
Generously ; while reek themselves away, unwatched,  
Night's watchfires dull : so feels the spirit when first  
Doubt quelled, faith's conquering arms flash certainty  
On reason's field ; so, too, when now the soul,  
God's bright and mountainous mysteries receives,  
Containing heaven ; moving themselves towards us,  
In their free greatness, as, by ships at sea,  
Come icebergs, imminently upon their base  
Heaving, poised ; pure and pointed as a star,  
Afar off glittering, of invisible depth,  
And in the light above, dissolving.

*Festus.*

Dear one !

My prayer shall be that thy prayer be fulfilled.  
And now, to earth again. Farewell, sweet soul.

*Angela.* Farewell. I will be oft with thee if maybe.

But if, as fate may order, me thou meet'st  
Elsewhere than here, demand of me no word,  
But imitative of virtues not yet thine,  
Thou shalt learn sometime, why, where silence is  
Worthless; and reticence only hath wise praise.

*Lucifer.* Earth like I more than this: I rather love  
A splendid failing than a petty good;  
Even as the lightning's bolt, whose course is downwards,  
Is nobler still than any fire which soars.  
I scarce can say wherefore I had thee hither,  
It was wrong, I fear.

*Festus.* Mayhap 'twas destiny,  
Life's special charm.

*Lucifer.* Go to—reasons are plenty,  
Nor ever absent, but when wanted. Come!

*Festus.* I am determined to be good again.  
Again? When was I otherwise than ill?  
Doth not sin pour from my soul like dew from earth,  
And, vapouring up before the face of God,  
Congregate there, in clouds, between heaven and me?  
What wonder that I lack delight of life?  
For it is thus—when amid the world's delights,  
How warm soe'er we feel a moment among them—  
We find ourselves, when the hot blast hath blown,  
Prostrate, and weak, and wretched, even as I am.

*Lucifer.* I have done nothing for thee yet. Thou  
heaven  
Shalt see, and hell, and all the sights of space,  
Whene'er thou choosest.

*Festus.* Not then now.

*Lucifer.* Up! rise!

*Festus.* No; I'll be good; and will see none of them.

*Lucifer.* Remember, there's the moon.

*Festus.* My memory  
Is most tenacious of the things of light,  
And the commands of love.

*Lucifer.* Oh, happy thought!

## XVI.

Charged by the spirit e'er upwards ripening, man  
 And evil, his mightier minister, invade  
 Peaceful, that sacred sphere, the queen of heaven,  
 Whose passive utterances of light reveal  
 The birth of things, their subjectness to soul,  
 Spiritual and human ; sin's source, and the means  
 Whereby perfection reattained, and men  
 And angels joined in bliss with God, all good  
 Shall be at full ; and Time, his crown resigned  
 After his day's reign, to Eternity,—  
 Mother of him, and of ages all, cease. Here,  
 Inspired by love of soul-life progressive,  
 Though for a season thwarted the daring spirit  
 Promise exacts unforfeitable, from one  
 Who can fulfil vow made to test the skies  
 Perfective, elevative of life.

*The Moon.*

## FESTUS, LUCIFER, and LUNIEL.

*Festus.* Thus far along these silent wastes of light  
 Have we, unseeing and unseen, held on.  
 Time's sands seem turned to seed-pearl as they glide,  
 In luminous slumber, through his shadowy glass,  
 To glorified repose ; while snowy Peace  
 Hushes the infant soul, here born again,  
 To wonder and delight. And yet these rocks,  
 Whose flames once flourished in the face of heaven,  
 Like burning banners o'er a fiend host, there  
 Arrested in ignition, fire made stone,  
 Speak out of other state than quiet once.  
 Not Chaos when in travail of the earth,  
 And groaning with the birth-pang, nor the sun's  
 Deserts of fire, sea-deep with drifting flame ;  
 Nor all contortions of the solemn clouds,  
 Can match the immarbled madness of this orb :  
 As though some vast wild passionate soul, ablaze  
 Through all its nature with volcanic sin,  
 By God's one word translated into light,  
 And the pure beauty of celestial peace,  
 With adamant silence seized, had 'come  
 That instant changeless, deathless and divine.  
 Still meet we not what in this sphere we seek.  
 Methinks my mission here may fail, and might,  
 Were not my soul by force of faith in her  
 Assured, who urged our hither steps, mine most  
 Investigative, as like to light on truth  
 Here hidden ; and though long baffled, as to me

Seems, who from sea-bed dry to hill-top have sought  
Vainly, the angel virtue of this orb,  
Still trust I to behold her, not as yet  
Rightly, perhaps, invoked. Or shall I call  
Her aid, who willed us here ?

*Lucifer.* And if I knew not  
To an ace our whereabouts, though groping, now  
And then, through manifold darkness, as we have done ;  
And of our failures, quite enough ! I, too,  
Might deem this changeful spherelet just the spot,—  
It is bounded, west by light, and east by night,  
And north and south by nothing and the wind,  
For all poetic possibles, and believe  
Truth captured, might romance to us all the night,  
Two se'nnights long, in allegories. At last !

*Festus.* Lo now the angel, as foretold. She makes  
Hither. O beauty, holy and divine,  
Life-eyed, soul-crowned, illuminated with truth.  
Mark how unearthly fair and pure ; her air  
Of sad felicity, and her mingled mien  
Of innocent life and knowledge absolute.

*Lucifer.* Ere Time had whet his infant scythe, or left  
His cradling clouds, or yon pale watery star,  
Heaven's giant tear, first cast its shade o'er space,  
That angel knew I well ; but now, no more.  
Nor wished I here to meet, nor thou with her.

*Festus.* Mind's silent invocacy hath oft such end.

*Luniel.* Earth-child, behold the angel of this orb.  
Long have I marked thy wonder at these scenes,  
Thy search for me ; this ceased, that satiate now.  
Much of the passed thou 'mindst me, and the race  
These hills and plains, once populous, teemed with, thee  
Not wholly like ; of purer strain than thine,  
Aërial more, meseems ; for virtue, hence,  
Translate, entire to heaven. I, thus, charge-freed,  
Rejoice to bid thee welcome, from what orb  
Ever thou hailest, the sun, which, day by day,  
All forces of the world converts to light,  
Exhaustless, and the hoards he spends, renews ;  
Or further star ; thrice welcome ; whencesoe'er,  
Welcome ! What tidings bringst thou ? say, art thou  
The earnest of the line to come, foretold  
By skiey spirits and friendliest, as once more  
Soul-wise, to people these silvery solitudes  
Of light, whose advent I these ages wait ?

*Festus.* O holy and divine one. I am man,  
And not the hero of the destined race  
Thou hopest ; not here inducted ; just allowed  
Latewhile, by leave divine, I, touching thus  
At yon bright wanderer of the solar realm

Hesperian, like thyself of crescent brow,  
Nigher the sun one grade than we, where now  
Aspirant of heaven, a spirit blessed of God,  
A sweet and sacred sister of my soul,  
Sojourns ; and, tending thence, towards earth mine own,  
Am by her hither bidden, that I might learn  
From thee, lone watcher of the skies, and sole  
Mediatress 'tween the sun and earth, the fates  
Spiritual to be fulfilled of those we love,  
And mighty-minded man. And such we hold  
Thy sanctity of nature, thine unweighed  
Largesse of light intelligible, and calm  
Control of ill, thou wilt for me unseal  
The fountain of the future, and charm forth  
Wave after wave of wonder.

*Luniel.* Thou, too, who?

*Lucifer.* Master and servant am I here of him ;  
Thine equal, more and less. But come not I  
Inquiring or desiring aught of thee.  
The future is to me mere nothingness ;  
The passed but as a dream ; the present is  
My portion ; therein only do I live.  
Among these soulless solitudes, in sooth,  
Seems little call for me. But here I am.

*Laniel.* Oh well, I ween, do we each other know;  
For all things, soul or spirit, here show clear.  
Within the radiant region of this orb,  
Diaphanous as light, nor mist nor cloud  
The unconditioned vision dims; and thou,  
Tempter of life, to me art throughly known.  
I know thee as the evil spirit of time.  
But mystery is there in thine origin,  
Thy ministry, thy fall, which, none create,  
Not even thou thyself canst fathom. God  
Only can read what he hath written there  
In hieroglyphic darkness, and he will;  
That his great works may know themselves and him,  
Ere all the ages end. From God I own  
Power to foretell what only he foreknows;  
And ye are both predestined beings. Such  
His pleasurable will, that they who serve  
Rule with him—who obey not, serve him still.

*Lucifer.* It is even so ; thou sayest truth.

*Festus.*

**Thy words,**

More precious to mine ear than seaborne pearls,  
Pierce me with light. Speak on, pray.

***Luniel.***

**Mortal, know**

Our spirits are the keys to all we see ;  
And whoso, first permitted and inspired  
Of heaven, but pondereth well the page of life

Before him, shall unlock at last the store  
 Hid in it and all others. To predict  
 The coming it is needfullest to con  
 The passed and present. As to things of time,  
 Time is divisional; eternity  
 All unitive. Perfection is to come.  
 I thus the mutual destinies have learned  
 Of thine orb and mine own.

*Festus.* Inform me, then,  
 O holy and divine one ! who now tread,  
 On this sole purpose bent, these shores of light,  
 Silently shining, by thy spirit graced,  
 The god-state of the future.

*Luniel.* Be it so.  
 Attend ye ; for ye witnesses are both  
 To wisdom, of her world-comprising plan.  
 One is the end and origin of all.  
 God, from the first, was solely in himself;  
 Nor aught was in existence, God except :  
 Nor time, nor world, life, flesh, sense, soul, nor sin  
 Nay, there was no negation ; God sole all.  
 But willing to create, his hand he spread  
 From east to west, and constituted space ;  
 From north to south he planned the boundless map,  
 And consecrated it. The universe  
 Is but a state of being, and a life  
 And time condition of the will divine ;  
 A veil whose web is light embossed with stars ;  
 Through which the eternal essence kindly deigns  
 To manifest itself ; and all he makes,  
 As buds and tender branches bourgeoning,  
 From Being's sacred stem, making to bless.  
 Deep in the universal centre of things,  
 Infix'd the Infinite, for gods God made,  
 Therefore, the heavens ; and dark æthereal space,  
 For the immortal angels, love sustained,  
 Which occupy with him eternity,  
 And sin not, err not, doubt not. Next he made,  
 By might omnific and deific love,  
 Matter, for beings of a nature mixed,  
 Whose forms should be material, blessed with life,  
 Vegetive, fleshly ; these instinctive, those  
 Unconscious ; and for these and him to come,  
 With starry globes innumerable, suns,  
 Planets, and moons, and meteors, circumvolved  
 Each round the other, round their central sun,  
 In countless clouds and firmamental wholes,  
 Whose orbits scarce demean infinitude,  
 Did he the void impeople ; he the suns  
 Of self-genetic, space-creating light,

As types and tokens of his heavenly love  
And beatific power, with spirits vast  
And world ordained intelligences, fined  
From all creation, through its thousand grades.  
For man, the mighty earth, and all the orbs  
Revolving round the middle thrones of fire,  
Compacted of the elements, wherein  
Dwell separately all less perfect souls ;  
For him the moon, reflective, ministrant.  
Of all he chose one system as a law,  
The great ensample of his starry scheme,  
One sun, one earth, one moon, one race, one tribe.  
He rules by choice the universal whole.  
All that are angels, therefore, held, or gods,  
And worshipped by the ignorant soul, are man ;  
Man, self-inclusive of all lower forms,  
All higher natures less than the Most High.  
For man is of two kinds, the spiritual  
And fleshly ; yet we both have but one name ;  
Since angelhood is manhood glorified ;  
Raised up distinctly to divinity ;  
And homed and heavened within the embrace of God.  
The final sum that science crowns her with,  
This ; between God and nature, man alone ;  
However various his conditions be,  
Through space's universal round, and all  
The countless orbs of viewless skies, exists ;  
Nature's essential summit he and God's  
Deific incarnation : this weigh well ;  
For spirit is refracted in the flesh,  
And shows as crooked what is straightness' self.  
Call all not God nor nature, man ; nor fiend  
Nor angel but his kin ; God, thus, the world,  
And man, are all : man midst, the third great form.  
Wherein unite the two divine extremes,  
In vital essence. Partly viewed, to each  
His double nature is allied ; conjoined  
They embrace themselves in him, compact effect  
Of God and the lone universe ; he the mean  
Immortal, vital, of all things, brute life,  
And heaven's divine eternity. In man  
Do God and nature reconcile themselves ;  
God's image he, and the world's. In mental kind,  
In moral and spiritual his sire's ; in frame,  
This elemental and transitional shape,  
His mighty mother Nature's favourite son.  
Soul, quintessential element, unto her  
Heaven's love-gift he alone heirs of her fruit ;  
She perfected in him most ; of her line,  
Head-glory. As man the quality of all life

Thus shares above, below, and matter inert,  
 So, in his nature sanctified, all things back  
 To their final origin return, in round  
 Totality of life. For our dear sakes,  
 Life mortal is exalt to life eterne,  
 And God with justest love still saves from death,  
 To heaven's divinest destinies, the son  
 Of his eternal bridals.

*Festus.*

Whence are we?

*Luniel.* Ohild of the royal blood of man redeemed,  
 The starry strain of spirit elect, create  
 Before all worlds, all ages, thence we are.  
 This, therefore, be thy future and thy fate.  
 As water putrefied and purified,  
 Seven times by turns, will never more corrupt;  
 So thou and thine whole race, all change endured,  
 Through doubt, sin, knowledge, faith, love, power, and  
 bliss,

Shall practise every note of Being's scale,  
 Till the whole orb coharmonize with heaven,  
 And pure imperial peace rule all below;—  
 Till, star by star, these bright and sacred seats,  
 Whose ancestry of sempiternal suns  
 Comes of the vast and universal void,  
 And in whose lineage of light yon earth  
 Seems but a new possession, scarcely worth  
 Accepting or rejecting, shall at last  
 Into primordial nothingness relapse;  
 And man, the universal son of God,  
 Who occupied in time those starry spheres,  
 Regenerate and redeemed shall live for aye,  
 Made one with deity; all evil gone,  
 Dispersed as by a thunderclap of light.

*Lucifer.* Spirit serene! Hath evil no effect?

*Luniel.* Timeous it hath, being the shadow of good.  
 With man all good hath evil, but with God  
 Evil itself is good.

*Festus.*

And sin and hell?

*Luniel.* Evil and sin are twin with time and man.  
 Sin from a selfish, sensual, source sprung, seeks  
 An individual end; whereby we stand  
 Opposing deity, and the great commonwealth  
 Of worldly life; sin voluntary evil;  
 Ill nature's sin involuntary 'gainst God;  
 But good, wherein with God we concentrate,  
 Though bound on Being's very utmost verge,  
 Unites us with the infinite, and rules  
 Right through us, as a radius of the law  
 Eternal of intelligence which bounds,  
 Quickens, upholds, and rectifies all things.

Sin is the birth of evil ; hell, of sin ;  
 Destruction of corruption forms the end.  
 Heat is not in the sun, nor wrath in God,  
 Who, though our faith may waver, still is love.  
 'Tis the eye twinkles, not the star. When him  
 We spurn we suffer : suffer and inflict,  
 On him our suffering, gracious he, all time.  
 Revenge, wrath, judgment, all are names of love ;  
 The crowned effect of being, and therein  
 Result. Such retribution is our God's :  
 Such glorious retribution as the sun  
 Inflicts on fogs and shadows. Hell is part  
 Of nature. Human retribution stands  
 Divine in ordination ; but divine  
 Judgment on human souls by torturing fires,  
 In everlasting blast, a blind reproach  
 To the pure God, who blesseth all he makes.

*Lucifer.* Destruction I believe in. Mercy may  
 What it once made, unmake ; scarce re-create  
 Into its opposite. Between man and man  
 Justice is sacred, and 'tween man and God,  
 Whose equity all embraces, mercy is sure.  
 But between God and fiend no middle power  
 Exists, save man, and no creator he.

*Luniel.* Thee God ! all creatural nature more or less  
 Denies ; but thou, above all contraries,  
 All lovest, all affirmest, as of thee.

*Festus.* As when two clouds, such differences delight,  
 By controvertive currents blown of air,  
 Each other's path cross, vast in seeming grace,  
 As knowing heaven both ample and apt enough  
 Even opposites to tolerate ; each to me  
 Truth's footsteps seems to track. From both I learn,  
 Scanning the depths of Deity, what fate  
 Inexplicable judgment first pronounced,  
 By arbitrary rule, in reason's light  
 Shows righteous, shows humane, shows worthy God.  
 Yea even here as everywhere, let man  
 Worship his Recreator, and the world's,  
 Made perfect blissward, by preparative fire.  
 O thou, who holdst the universe in thyself,  
 Not only as we may mentally, but in act ;  
 Cause uncontaminate by effect, all else  
 Effect with cause creatively connexed ;  
 Who in Being's inaccessible depths dost dwell  
 Central, thence self-diffused through all ; whose course  
 Through space uncomprehended, we but track  
 By the evanishing star-dust of thy feet  
 Left on heaven's roads ; from world nathless to world,  
 From firmament to firmament can we trace

Each soul his individual link with thee ;  
 The pure invisible touch which makes us thine ;  
 The something more substantial than the sun,  
 More general than the void, yet nested here ;  
 As through the æry silence of the soul,  
 Swifter than eagle rushing upon the wind,  
 Thou sweepst into possession, when thou wilt.  
 So many are thy mercies, what is left  
 Save this, to ask ? continue to us that  
 Thou givest. To cease pertaineth not to thee.  
 The elements may all confusedly fail ;  
 Systems, now burning, stiffen corselike ; or slide  
 Into their graves of darkness and decay ;  
 The sun at length exhausted in the strife  
 For fiery aliment from the self-thinned air,  
 With his æthereal victor, sleep, and die ;  
 And firmaments conglobed them, till at last  
 The universe in one orb concentrate, fit,  
 Then, for thy footstool only. Change like this  
 Ten thousand times may happen, until it fall  
 To the observant spirits at thy right hand  
 Noteless, by reoccurrence ; man, the while,  
 Restored to the essential whence he came  
 Consorting but with the infinite, nor knowing  
 To utter what is not divine and true,  
 Shall ripen in thy bosom, till he grow  
 Through endless heavens, triumphant and serene,  
 Into the thronèd God thou badst him be.

*Luniel.* Depart. Thou knowest all things, knowing  
 this.

The world is God's broad word, whose sense is heaven,  
 To those who wisely read ; time's trilogy,  
 The mighty drama of the Lord ; the rest  
 Man, angels, act and hymn. To him devote  
 Be all the paradisaal world to come ;  
 Each hill an altar named to God, where man  
 Saintly, may pray and praise ; a covenant heap  
 Of witnessed commune 'tween them ; oh, may earth  
 Sea-like, but render back the heaven she nears ;  
 Be every flower a censer of delight  
 Spiritual ; each wing an augury of the skies.

*Festus.* A future this, to live for.

*Lucifer.*

I abhor

The self-delusions men affect. With them  
 The future is a god-king, born in heaven,  
 Rich with hereditary royalties,  
 And entail of interminable times.  
 Morn's roseate breath, fresh blown o'er night's bright dew,  
 Is foul before this urchin's as a sough ;  
 His hand is like the lily's fragrant snow ;

And he is robed in weeds of whitest sheen ;  
 Pet godling of the world ! The present, what ?  
 A ragged, beggared dotard, sick to death  
 Of the grey years, and round returning skies.  
 But what's the truth ? Nor passed, nor future, is ;  
 The present only is all time.

*Festus.* Too much  
 Thou hast taught me, spirit, of the passed, to shun  
 The surety 'tis in me, for good or ill ;  
 And thou, too much, sweet angel, not to feel  
 The hopes first planted in my mind by her  
 Who bade me here, of commune blessed to come,  
 Make henceforth life's best part, that I the more  
 Concede me to the future.

*Luniel.* Know then, friend  
 Of her I love with thee, that limited though  
 In sphere, each spirit celestial, yet the extent  
 To all seems well nigh vergeless : and if thou,  
 Prepared, wouldst ken what more of human fates,  
 Even of the individual spirits that star  
 Earth's passed, renowned ; and how the eternal years  
 Find them and leave ; or lapped in thought, as these,  
 Or fired to act, as those, perpetual, say !

*Festus.* Dear angel ! If through all these radiant  
 spheres,  
 Thou show'st, so stimulant to the inquisitive mind,  
 Of dreams of miracles wrought, mayhap, by son,  
 Prophet, or saint of the Supreme ; not masked  
 In mean or stable state, but as a god,  
 Carrying his kingdom with him, and his court,  
 His converts, and his heaven ; that so, though plunged  
 In death's abyss, death passed, it is in his train's  
 Triumph, and the effluence of his conquering light,  
 They enter deity ; if, nay, trust me, e'er  
 Mine it might be, more proofs of God's just love  
 Than ever earth shows, to learn, such would I rather  
 In thy care tutelar, than 'neath other wing  
 Angelic, these mine eyes have yet beheld.

*Luniel.* God's are the ultimate ends of life ; but these,  
 Sun, planet, satellite, heaven's all-typèd spheres,  
 Of evervariant being, it is mine to search,  
 Sojourn in, pass through ; if abide in not.  
 Mean mundane these, and just remedial spheres  
 Meedful, preliminary, where meet, death passed,  
 Men's spirits ; for whose can His pure eyelids, heaven's  
 Passive rebuke, sustain ? Such hovering search  
 Our possible privilege, leave being had, to enrich  
 The spirit with royal liberties but fulfilled  
 In thy kind, deathwise ; and thus the freed soul fit  
 For truth, orbèd perfectly in heaven alone :

High thought and pure, it is mine to hallow aye,  
And guide through heaven the meditative soul,  
Slightful of luxuries. Let not world-life warp  
Thy heart from its strain upwards. Shun, severe,  
Seclusive, youth's frivolities and deceits.

*Lucifer.* Oh yes, I'll help in all austerities.  
There's nothing like extremes. The mean's too good.

*Festus.* Earth was my future once, but now 'tis  
heaven.

*Luniel.* Earth is the emerald tablet, by God's throne,  
He writes his laws upon, and his open fates ;  
'That all the heavens his starry rede may learn,  
Even to the end. Thither ye therefore hie.  
Earth's angel waits thee next, estranged by woe  
From all her kindred world-wardens, she weeps  
The impending end of things, nor ceases haunt  
Heaven with thrice deprecated prayer. Farewell.

*Lucifer.* Come then, since earth and heaven have willed  
it thus,  
Let us fare forth ; our mutual destinies  
Coeval, and concurrent with the world.  
This life thou findest not, say, a thought too grave ?  
Who seeks creation's mysteries ;—well, a change,  
Now and again, seems reasonable, I own.

*Festus.* How can the aspiring spirit, whose faith is  
sure,  
Whose aims, experiences like these, converse  
With pure intelligence, and advance in paths,  
Heavenward, divine, prove reach their mark e'er change  
Its end, and change for meaner ?

*Lucifer.* Pleasure, love,  
And mirth, ye graces three, make up for this,  
Right soon, or something will go wrong. We want  
Some merry chirrupping friends, that's clear. But wait.  
A sunny pool 'mid life's brief stream, I seem  
To see, where glides, scarce sensible of the flow,  
Youth's gilded shallop calmed 'mong lilies ; seem  
To catch a song ; quaff wine.

*Festus.* What sayst ?

*Lucifer.* I say,  
Me unconditioned being charms not ; nor things  
Certain ; contingencies are enough for me ;  
And serve me passing well.

*Festus.* Farewell, sweet orb.  
Earth draws us like a lodestone. See, we are coming.

## XVII.

But dimmed,  
 Drowned, lost all this, like an eye in tears of mirth,  
 Like a star setting in a twinkling sea,  
 Mid revellings, song and dance, wild glee and wine,  
 Where beauty's orb rules, lady of the hour,  
 More astral than terrene, o'er lovelorn youth,  
 And damsels on whose lily necks the blue  
 Veins branch themselves in hidden luxury,  
 Hues of the heaven they seem to have vanished from.  
 By new loves lured, by life's sheer levities, swift  
 The tempted takes his leap, as cloud-lapped stream  
 Vaults o'er its crags, self-dissipative in air,  
 To end in watery dust without all end ;  
 Mere spells the spirit's eye to daze 'gainst needs  
 Of nobler being ; mock substitutes for aims  
 Truth asks ; but saddened penitently, at close,  
 By sweet remembrance of the sainted soul  
 Once loved, aye hallowed ; still a force on high,  
 Heart-purifying. Oh ! still in scenes like this ;  
 Youth lingers longest, drawing out his time  
 As goldbeater his wire attenuates, till  
 It would reach round earth, and be of no use, then.

*Party and Entertainment.—Garden : Fountains.*

FESTUS, HELEN, LUCIFER, CHARLES, LUCY, and OTHERS.

*Festus.* My Helen, let us rest awhile,  
 For most I love thy calmer smile ;  
 We'll not be missed from you gay throng,  
 They dance so eagerly and long ;  
 And were one half to go away,  
 I'll bet the rest would scarce perceive it.

*Helen.* With thee I either go or stay,  
 Prepared, the same, to like or leave it ;  
 These two perhaps will take our places ;  
 They seem to stand with longing faces.

*Festus.* Then sit we, love, and sip with me,  
 And I will teach thyself to thee.  
 Thy nature is so pure and fine,  
 'Tis most like wine ;  
 Thy blood, which blushes through each vein,  
 Rosy champagne ;  
 And the fair skin which o'er it grows,  
 Bright as its snows.  
 Thy wit, which thou dost work so well  
 Is like cool moselle ;  
 Like madeira, bright and warm,  
 Is thy smile's charm ;  
 Claret's glory hath thine eye,

Or mine must lie ;  
 But nought can like thy lips possess  
 Deliciousness ;  
 And now that thou'rt divinely merry,  
 I'll kiss and call thee sparkling sherry.

*Helen.* I sometimes dream that thou wilt leave me  
 Without thy love, even me, lonely ;  
 And oft I think, though oft it grieve me,  
 That I am not thy one love only :  
 But I shall alway love thee till  
 This heart like earth in death, stand still.

*Festus.* I love thee, and will leave thee never,  
 Until my soul leave life for ever.  
 If earth can from her children run,  
 And leave the seasons, leave the sun ;  
 If yonder stars can leave the sky,  
 Bright truants from their home in heaven ;  
 Immortals who deserve to die,  
 Were death not too good to be given ;  
 If heaven can leave and live from God,  
 And man tread off his cradle clod ;  
 If God can leave the world he sowed,  
 Right in the heart of space to fade ;  
 Soul, earth, star, heaven, man, world, and God  
 May part—not I from thee, sweet maid.  
 Ah, see again my favourite dance,  
 See the wavelike line advance ;  
 And now in circles break,  
 Like raindrops on a lake :  
 Now it opens, now it closes,  
 Like a wreath dropping into roses.

*Helen.* It is a lovely scene,  
 Fair as aught on earth ;  
 And we feel, when it hath been,  
 At heart a dearth ;  
 As from the breaking up of some bright dream ;  
 The failing of a fountain's spray-topped stream.

*Will.* Ladies—your leave—we'll choose a queen  
 To rule this fair and festive scene.

*Charles.* And it were best to choose by lot,  
 So none can hold herself forgot.

[*They draw lots : it falls to Helen.*]

*Festus.* I knew, my love, how this would be ;  
 I knew that fate must favour thee.

*All.* Lady fair ! we throne thee queen :  
 Be thy sway as thou hast been—  
 Light, and lovely, and serene.

*Festus.* Here, wear this wreath. No ruder crown  
 Should deck that dazzling brow ;  
 Or ask yon halo from the moon—

'Twould well beseem thee now.  
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;  
 I crown thee queen of me ;  
 And oh ! but I am a happy land,  
 And a loyal land to thee.  
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;  
 Thou art queen in thine own right :  
 Feel ! my heart is as full as a town of joy ;  
 Look ! I've crowded mine eyes with light.  
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;  
 Thou art queen by right divine ;  
 And thy love shall set, neither night nor day,  
 O'er this subject heart of mine.  
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;  
 Thou art queen by the right of the strong ;  
 And thou didst but win where thou mightst have slain,  
 Or have bounden in thralldom long.  
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;  
 Thou art my queen for aye ;  
 As the moon doth queen the night, my love ;  
 As the night doth crown the day.  
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;  
 Queen of the brave and free ;  
 For I'm brave to all beauty but thine, my love ;  
 And free to all beauty by thee.

*Helen.* Here, in this court of pleasure, blessed to reign,  
 If not the loveliest, where all are fair,  
 We still, one hour, our royalty retain,  
 To out-queen all in kindness and in care.  
 Love, beauty, honour, bravery, and wit ;  
 Was ever queen served by such noble slaves ?  
 The peerage of the heart—for heaven's court fit :  
 We'll dream no more that earth hath ills or graves.  
 With mirth and melody, and love we reign :  
 Begin we, then, our sweet and pleasurable sway ;  
 And here, though light, so strong is beauty's chain,  
 That none shall know how blindly they obey.  
 We have but to lay on one light command ;  
 That all shall do the most what best they love ;  
 And Pleasure hath her punishments at hand  
 For all who will not pleasure's rule approve.  
 But no ! there's none of us can disobey,  
 Since, by our one command, we free ye thus ;  
 And, as our powers must on your pleasures stay—  
 Support—and you will reign along with us.

*Festus.* Ha ! Lucifer ! How now ?

*Lucifer.* I come in sooth to keep my vow.

*Festus.* Thy vow ?

*Lucifer.* To revel in earth's pleasures,  
 And tire down mirth in her own measures.

*Festus.* Go thy ways: I shrink and tremble  
 To think how deep thou canst dissemble;  
 For who would dream that in yon breast  
 The heart of hell was burning?  
 Or deem that strange and listless guest  
 Some priceless spirit earning?  
 I hear methinks from every footstep rise  
 A trampled spirit's smothered cries.

*Lucifer.* But for yon jocund wight, I fear,  
 —Just in the nick of time we met,  
 I stopped, and asked him where you were;  
 His kindness I shall ne'er forget—  
 Small chance had I of being here.  
 I think it quite ungenerous in you,  
 At such gay gatherings as the present,  
 My once-loved converse to eschew,  
 Just as I meant to make things pleasant.  
 It's rather hard when one has called  
 The club, to be yourself black-balled.

*Charles.* Fest, engage fair Marian's hand.

*Festus.* Pass me; she is free no less  
 Than I, who by my queen will stand;  
 May it please her loveliness!

*Helen.* Festus, we know the love, and see,  
 Which was with Marian and thee,  
 Our early friend, once Clara called,  
 But now from us long while estranged;  
 In all, except her hopeless love  
 For thee, her faithless lover, changed;  
 And we would see ye once again,  
 I nothing doubt, resume—

*Marian.* In vain,  
 I wish it not. I do but strive,  
 A love though buried still alive,  
 To hallow with the dearer name  
 That sheltered its first flickering flame.  
 He seeks another. Though he range  
 From heart to heart, not I shall change.  
 Love veered unbidden; he yet may learn  
 Unsought, unsolaced, to return.

*Helen.* I hold him not against his will;  
 Thine he may be, thine only still.

*Lucifer.* Well-rooted plants soon fruit. A lighter love  
 Will lighter instincts in him move.  
 These joys, these raptures of mere sense,  
 Senseless, enjoyment's pure pretence,  
 Must surely cloud all innocence.  
 And as he gains in knowledge high  
 Of spirit, nature, destiny,  
 Faith, fostered by yon faithful soul,

So ripe in love, so rich in dole,  
Faith must as surely in him die.

*Festus.* I marvel at myself. There seems  
A power within me bids me claim  
A freedom like space-filling dreams,  
Which are, and are not, but in name;  
A fateful freedom, all the same;  
Wherefrom I vainly try to shape  
Some way of conquest or escape.

*Lucifer.* My schemes succeed as soon as planned;  
Needs must, if so and so but drive;  
When once you know your neighbour's hand,  
It's wondrous how your game will thrive.

*Charles.* Of freedom we'll have no abuse.  
Dance with your royal fair.

*Lucifer.* Make no excuse.

*Festus.* Rebellion pleases most, though little use.  
I will not dance to-night again,  
Though bid by all the queens that reign.

*Helen.* What, Festus! treason and disloyalty  
Already to our gentle royalty?

*Festus.* No—I was wrong—but to forgive  
Be thy sublime prerogative!

*Helen.* Most amply, then, I pardon thee;  
In proof whereof, come dance with me. [*A dance.*]

*Laurence.* How sweetly Marian sweeps along;  
Her step is music, and her voice is song.  
Silver-sandalled foot! how blest  
To bear the breathing heaven above,  
Which on thee, Atlas-like, doth rest,  
And round thee move.

Ah! that sweet little foot: I swear  
I could kneel down and kiss it there.  
I should not mind if she were Pope;  
I would change my faith.

*Charles.* Works, too, we hope.

*Laurence.* Ah! smile on me again with that sweet  
smile,  
Which could from heaven my soul to thee beguile;  
As I mine eye would turn from awful skies  
To hail the child of sun and storm arise;  
Or, from eve's holy azure, to the star  
Which beams and becks the spirit from afar;  
For fair as yon star-wreath which high doth shine,  
And worthy but to deck a brow like thine;  
Pure as the light from orbs which ne'er  
Hath blessed us yet in this far sphere;  
As eyes of seraphs lift alone,  
Through ages on the holy throne;  
So bright, so fair, so free from guile,

And freshening to my heart thy smile ;  
 Ay, passing all things here, and all above,  
 To me, thy look of beauty, truth, and love.

*Marian.* Pray, heed me not. 'Twere vain to me  
 To pay thy heart's lost fealty.

*Harry.* Thy friend hath led his lady out.

*Festus.* He looks most wickedly devout.

*Fanny.* When introduced, he said he knew her,  
 And had been long devoted to her.

*Emma.* Indeed—but he is too gallant,  
 And serves me far more than I want.  
 He vows that he could worship me—  
 Why—look ! he is now upon his knee !

*Lucifer.* I quaff to thee this cup of wine,  
 And would, though men had nought but brine ;  
 E'en the brine of their own tears,  
 To cool those lying lips of theirs ;  
 And were it all one molten pearl,  
 I would drain it to thee, girl ;  
 Ay, though each drop were worth of gold  
 Too many pieces to be sold ;  
 And though for each I drank to thee,  
 Fate add an age of misery :  
 For thou canst conjure up my spirit  
 To aught immortals may inherit ;  
 To good or evil, woe or weal—  
 To all that fiends or angels feel ;  
 And wert thou to perdition given,  
 I'd join thee in the scorn of heaven !

*Emma.* Oh fy ! to only think of such a fate !

*Lucifer.* Better than not to think on't till too late.  
 They'd not believe me, Festus, if I told them,  
 That hell, and all its hosts, this hour behold them.

*Festus.* Scarcely ; that demon here again !  
 But though my heart burst in the strain  
 I will be happy might and main !  
 So wreathe my brow with flowers,  
 And pour me purple wine,  
 And make the merry hours  
 Dance, dance with glee like thine.  
 While thus enraptured, I and thou,  
 Love crowns the heart, as flowers the brow.  
 The rosy garland twine  
 Around the noble bowl,  
 Like laughing loves that shine  
 Upon the generous soul ;  
 Be mine, dear maid, the loves, and thou  
 Shalt ever bosom them as now.  
 Then plunge the blushing wreath  
 Deep in the ruddy wine ;

As the love of thee till death  
Is deep in heart of mine ;  
While both are blooming on my brow  
I cannot be more blessed than now.

*Lucifer.* Thou talkst of hearts in style to me quite  
fresh :

The human heart's about a pound of flesh.

*Festus.* Forgive him, love, and aught he says.

*Helen.* What is that trickling down thy face ?

*Festus.* Oh, love, that is only wine,  
From the wreath which thou didst twine ;  
And, casting in the bowl, I bound,  
For coolness' sake, my temples round.

*Helen.* I thought 'twas a thorn which was tearing thy  
brow ;

And if it were only a rose-thorn was tearing,  
Why, whether of gold or of roses, as now,  
A crown, if it hurt us, is hardly worth wearing.

*Lucy.* From what fair maid hadst thou that flower ?  
It came not from my wreath nor me.

*Charles.* Love lives in thee as in a bower,  
And sure this must have dropped from thee ;  
From thy lip, or from thy cheek :  
See, its sister blushes speak.

Nay, never harm the harmless rose,  
Though given by a stranger maid ;  
'Tis sad enough to feel that flower  
Feels it must fade.

And trouble not the transient love,  
Though by another's side I sigh ;  
It is enough to feel the flame  
Flicker and die.

And thou to me art flame and flower,  
Of rosier body, brighter breath ;  
But softer, warmer than the truth—  
As sleep than death.

*Festus.* The dead of night: earth seems but seeming ;  
The soul seems but a something dreaming.  
The bird is dreaming in its nest,  
Of song, and sky, and loved one's breast ;  
The lap-dog dreams, as round he lies,  
In moonshine, of his mistress' eyes :  
The steed is dreaming, in his stall,  
Of one long breathless leap and fall :  
The hawk hath dreamed him thrice of wings  
Wide as the skies he may not cleave ;  
But waking, feels them clipped, and clings  
Mad to the perch 'twere mad to leave :  
The child is dreaming of its toys ;  
The murderer, of calm home joys ;

The weak are dreaming endless fears ;  
 The proud of how their pride appears ;  
 The poor enthusiast who dies,  
 Of his life-dreams the sacrifice,  
 Sees, as enthusiast only can,  
 The truth that made him more than man ;  
 And hears once more, in visioned trance,  
 That voice commanding to advance,  
 Where wealth is gained—love, wisdom won,  
 Or deeds of danger dared and done.  
 The mother dreameth of her child ;  
 The maid of him who hath beguiled ;  
 The youth of her he loves too well ;  
 The good of God ; the ill of hell ;  
 Who live of death ; of life who die ;  
 The dead of immortality.  
 The earth is dreaming back her youth ;  
 Hell never dreams, for woe is truth ;  
 And heaven is dreaming o'er her prime,  
 Long ere the morning stars of time ;  
 And dream of heaven alone can I,  
 My lovely one, when thou art nigh.

*Helen.* Let some one sing. Love, mirth, and song,  
 The graces of this life of ours,  
 Go ever hand in hand along,  
 And ask alike each other's powers.

*Lucy sings.* For every leaf the loveliest flower  
 Which beauty sighs for from her bower ;  
 For every star a drop of dew ;  
 For every sun a sky of blue ;  
 For every heart a heart as true.

For every tear by pity shed  
 Upon a fellow-sufferer's head,  
 Oh ! be a crown of glory given ;  
 Such crowns as saints to gain have striven,  
 Such crowns as seraphs wear in heaven.

For all who toil at honest fame,  
 A proud, a pure, a deathless name ;  
 For all who love, who loving bless,  
 Be life one long, kind, close caress ;  
 Be life all love, all happiness.

*Will.* How can we better time employ,  
 Than celebrate, with every breath,  
 Through hours that laugh themselves to death,  
 This bridal feast of love and joy ?

*Festus.* That song reminds me,—but it may not be ;  
 No ! I am sailing on another sea.

*Lucifer.* Tell me what's the chiefest pleasure  
 In this world's high heaped measure !

*All.* Power—beauty—love—wealth—wine !

*Lucifer.* All different votes !

*Fanny.*

Come, Frederic—thine ?

What may thy joy-judgment be ?

*Frederic.* I scarce know how to answer thee ;

Each, apart, too soon will tire ;

Altogether slake desire.

So ask not of me the one chief joy of earth,

For that I'm unable to say ;

But here is a wreath which will lose its chief worth,

If ye pluck but one flower away.

Then these are the joys which should never dispart—

The joys which are dearest to me :

As the song, and the dance, and the laugh of the heart,

Thou, girl, and the goblet, be.

*Lucifer.* Oh, excellent ! the truth is clear ;

The one opinion, too, I love to hear.

*Helen.* Is this a queen's fate—to be left alone ?

I wish another had the throne.

Festus ! why art thou not here,

Beside thy liege and lady dear ?

*Festus.* My thoughts are happier oft than I,

For they are ever, love, with thee ;

And thine, I know, as frequent fly

O'er all that severs us, to me :

Like rays of stars, that meet in space,

And mingle in a bright embrace.

Never load thy locks with flowers,

For thy cheek hath a richer flush ;

And than wine, or the sunset hour,

Or the ripe yew-berry's blush.

Never braid thy brow with lights,

Like the sun, on his golden way

To the neck and the locks of night,

From the forehead fair of day.

Never star thy hand with stones,

For, for every dead light there,

Is a living glory gone,

Than the brilliant far more fair.

Nay, nay ; wear thy buds, braids, gems ;

Let the lovely never part ;

'Thou alone canst rival them,

Or in nature, or in art.

Be not sad ;—thou shalt not be :

Why wilt mourn, love, when with me ?

One tear that in thy eye could start

Could wash all purpose from my heart

But that of loving thee ;

If I could ever think to wrong

A love so riverlike, deep, pure, and long.

*Helen.* I cast mine eyes around, and feel  
There is a blessing wanting;  
Too soon our hearts the truth reveal,  
That joy is disenchanting.

*Festus.* I am a wizard, love; and I  
A new enchantment will supply;  
And the charm of thine own smile  
Shall thine own heart of grief beguile.  
Smile, I do command thee, rise  
From the bright depths of those eyes;  
By the bloom wherein thou dwellest,  
As in a rose-leaved nest;  
By the pleasure which thou tellest,  
And the bosom which thou swellest,  
I bid thee rise from rest;  
By the rapture which thou causest,  
And the bliss while e'er thou pausest,  
Obey my high behest.

*Helen.* Dread magician! cease thy spell;  
It hath wrought both quick and well.

*Festus.* Ah! thou hast dissolved the charm;  
Ah! thou hast outstepped the ring;  
Who shall answer for the harm  
Beauty on herself will bring?  
Come, I will conjure up again that smile—  
The scarce departed spirit. There it is!  
Settling and hovering round thy lips the while,  
Like some bright angel o'er the gates of bliss.  
And I could sit and set that rose-bright smile,  
Until it seemed to grow immortal there;  
A something abstract even of all beauty,  
As though 'twere in the eye or in the air.  
Ah! never may a heavier shadow rest  
Than thine own ringlets on that brow so fair;  
Nor sob, nor sorrow, shake the perfect breast  
Which looks for love, as doth for death despair.  
And now the smile, the sigh, the blush, the tear,  
Lo! all the elements of love are here.  
Nay, wither not, with doubt's mistrustful sigh,  
Love's tender, ah! too quickly perishing leaf:  
Nor let one bring tearlet beauty's eye  
O'ercloud with life embittering grief.  
Oh! weep not, sigh not; woe, nor mortal wrath,  
Should taint with sad defect a soul like thine;  
Say, is it given the rule-less lightning's path  
Earth-blinding, e'er to strike the stars divine?  
Sing, then, while thy lover sips,  
And hear the truth that wine discloses;  
Music lives within thy lips  
Like a nightingale in roses.

*Helen sings.* Oh ! love is like the rose,  
And a month it may not see,  
Ere it withers where it grows—  
Rosalie !

I loved thee from afar ;  
Oh ! my heart was lift to thee,  
Like a glass up to a star—  
Rosalie !

Thine eye was glassed in mine,  
As the moon is in the sea :  
And its shine was on the brine—  
Rosalie !

The rose hath lost its red ;  
And the star is in the sea ;  
And the briny tear is shed—  
Rosalie !

*Festus.* What the stars are to the night, my love,  
What its pearls are to the sea ;  
What the dew is to the day, my love,  
Thy beauty is to me.

*Helen.* I am but here the under-queen of beauty,  
For yonder hangs the likeness of the goddess ;  
And so to worship her is our first duty.  
The heavenly minds of old first taught the heavenly bodies  
Were to be worshipped ; and the idolatry  
Holds to this hour ; though, Beauty ! but of thine.  
I am thy priestess, and will worship thee,  
With all this brave and lovely train of mine ;  
Lo ! we all kneel to thee before thy pictured shrine.  
Yes—there, thou goddess of the heart,  
Immortal beauty, there !  
Thou glory of Jove's free-love skies,  
E'en like thyself too fair,  
Too bright, too sweet for mortal eyes,  
For earthly hearts too strong ;  
Thy golden girdle liftst and drawest  
The heavens and earth along.  
(Oh ! thou art as the cloudless moon,  
Undimmed and unarrayed ;  
No robe hast thou, no crown save yon—  
Goddess ! thy long locks' soft and sunbright braid.  
And there's thy son, Love—beauty's child—  
World-known for strangest powers ;  
Boy-god ! thy place is blest o'er all ;  
Smil'st thou at thoughts of ours ?  
And there, by thy luxurious side,  
The queen of heaven and Jove  
Stands ; and the deep delirious draught  
Drinks, from thy looks, of love,  
And lips, which oft have kissed away

The thunders from his brow,  
 Who ruled, men say, the world of worlds,  
 As God our God rules now.  
 And thou art yet as great o'er this  
 As erst o'er olden sky ;  
 Of all heaven's darkened deities,  
 The last live light on high.  
 God after god hath left thee lone,  
 Which lived on human breath ;  
 When prayers were breathed to them no more,  
 The false ones pined to death.  
 But in the service of young hearts  
 To loveliness and love,  
 Live thou shalt while yon wandering world,  
 Named unto thee, shall move.  
 No fabled dream art thou : all god,  
 Our souls acknowledge thee ;  
 For what would life, from love, be worth,  
 Or love from beauty be ?  
 Come, universal beauty, then,  
 Thou apple of God's eye,  
 To and through which all things were made,  
 Things deathless—things that die.  
 Oh ! lighten, live before us there ;  
 Leap in yon lovely form,  
 And give a soul. She comes ! It breathes,  
 So bright—so sweet—so warm.  
 Our sacrifice is over ; let us rise ;  
 For we have worshipped acceptably here ;  
 And let our glowing hearts and glimmering eyes,  
 O'erstrained with gazing on thy light too near,  
 Prove that our worship, goddess, was sincere.

*Festus.* I read that we are answered. The soft air  
 Doubles its sweetness ; and the fainting flowers,  
 Down hanging on the walls in wreaths so fair,  
 Bud forth afresh, as in their birth-day bowers.  
 Dew-laden, as oppressed with love and shame,  
 The rose-bud drops upon the lily's breast ;  
 Brighter the wine, the lamps have softer flame ;  
 Thy kiss flows freelier than the grape first pressed.  
 Life lightly lies on us, as in time's first hours,  
 Olympian, when the immortals went and came,  
 And skies crystalline heaven and earth both blessed.

*Will.* A dance, a dance !

*Helen.* Let us remain.

*Festus.* We will not tempt your sport again.

*Helen.* Behold where Marian sits alone,  
 The dance all sweeping round,  
 Like to some goddess hewn in stone,  
 With blooming garlands bound.

*Festus.* Tell me, Marian, what those eyes  
Can discover in the skies,  
Whereon thou gazest with such ecstasies?

*Marian.* For earth my soul hath lost all love,  
But heaven still loves and watches o'er me;  
Why should I not, then, look above,  
And pass, and pity all before me?

*Festus.* Oh! if yon worlds that shine o'er this,  
Have more of joy—of passion less—  
I would not change earth's chequered bliss  
For thrice the joy those orbs possess;  
Which seem, so strange their nature is,  
Faint with excess of happiness.

*Marian.* Thy heart with others hath its rest,  
And it shall wake with me;  
And if within another breast  
That heart hath made itself a nest,  
Mine is no more for thee.  
Heart-breaker, go! I cannot choose  
But love thee, and thy love refuse;  
And if my brow grow lined while young,  
And youth fly cheated from my cheek,  
'Tis that there lies below my tongue  
A word I will not speak:  
For I would rather die than deem  
Thou art not the glory thou didst seem.  
But if engirt by flood or fire,  
Who would live that could expire?  
Who would not dream, and dreaming die,  
If to wake were misery?

*Festus.* Whose woes are like to my woes? What is  
madness?  
The mind exalted to a sense of ill  
Soon sinks beyond it into utter sadness,  
And sees its grief before it like a hill.  
Oh! I have suffered till my brain became  
Distinct with woe, as is the skeleton leaf  
Whose green hath fretted off its fibrous frame,  
And bare to our immortality of grief.  
Deep in my heart there lies, as in truth's well,  
The image of thy soul;  
But ah! that fountain once so sweet, by spell  
Of power is sealed, beyond my will's control.

*Marian.* Like the light line that laughter leaves  
One moment on a bright young brow,  
So truth is lost ere love believes  
There can be aught save truth below.

*Festus.* But as the eye aye brightlier beams  
For every fall the lid lets on it,  
So oft the fond heart happier dreams

For the soft cheats love puts upon it.

*Marian.* I never dreamed of wretchedness ;  
I thought to love meant but to bless.

*Festus.* It once was bliss to me to watch  
Thy passing smile, and sit and catch  
The sweet contagion of thy breath—  
For love is catching—from such teeth ;  
Delicate little pearl-white wedges,  
All transparent at the edges.

*Marian.* False flatterer, cease.

*Festus.* It is my fate  
To love, and make who love me hate.

*Marian.* No ! 'tis to sue—to gain—deceive—  
To tire of—to neglect—and leave :  
The desolation of the soul  
Is what I feel ;

A sense of lostness that leaves death  
But little to reveal ;  
For death is nothing but the thought  
Of something being again nought.

*Helen.* Cease, lady, cease those aching sighs,  
Which shake the tear-drops from thine eyes,  
As morning wind, with wing fresh wet,  
Shakes dew out of the violet.

Forgive me if the love once thine  
Hath changed itself unsought to me ;  
I did not tempt it from thy heart,  
I planned no treason against thee ;  
And soon, perchance, 'twill be my part  
As thou now art, to be.

*Marian.* I blame no heart, no love, no fate ;  
And I have nothing to forgive :  
I wish for nought, repent of nought,  
Regret nought but to live.

*Helen.* Nay, sing ; it will relieve thy heart.

*Marian.* I cannot sing a mirthful strain ;  
And feel too much to act my part,  
Even of an ebbing vein.

*Festus.* Our hearts are not in our own hands :  
Why wilt thou make me say  
I cannot love as once I loved ?

*Marian.* Hear !—'tis for this I stay—  
To say we part—for ever part ;  
But oh ! how wide the line  
Between thy Marian's bursting heart,  
And that proud heart of thine.  
And thou wilt wander here and there,  
Ever the gay and free ;  
To other maids wilt fondly swear,  
As thou hast sworn to me ;

And I—oh ! I shall but retire  
 Into my grief alone ;  
 And kindle there the hidden fire,  
 That burns, that wastes unknown.  
 And love and life shall find their tomb  
 In that sepulchral flame :  
 Be happy—none shall know for whom—  
 I will not dream thy name.

*Festus.* As sings the swan with parting breath,  
 So I to thee ;  
 While love is leaving—worse than life—  
 Forewarningly.

Speak not, nor think thou any ill of me,  
 The son of destiny, the crown of fate,  
 The pen of power which writes earth's future state,  
 If thou wouldst not die soon, and wretchedly,  
 Oppressed with sense of passed felicity ;  
 Passed yet perchance to dawn again on thee.  
 Behold me bound beneath the threefold spell,  
 Which heaven hath laid upon me, earth, and hell.  
 It may be that I love thee even now  
 More than my tortured spirit dare avow ;  
 It may be that the clouds which dim my gaze,  
 Though rich with roseate gold, are full of scath,  
 And may disperse 'neath thy soul's purer rays ;  
 But now I cannot waver on my path ;  
 Nor condescend the world to undeceive,  
 Which doth delight in error and believe.  
 Time will unfold whate'er we have of truth,  
 As ripening years the greener growth of youth.  
 Thus then, farewell, dear maiden, ere I go ;  
 Thus dearly have I earned my rightful woe.

Oh ! if we e'er have loved, lady,  
 We must forego it now ;  
 Though sore the heart be moved, lady,  
 When bound to break its vow.  
 I'll always think on thee,  
 And thou sometimes—on whom, lady ?  
 And yet those thoughts must be  
 Like flowers flung on the tomb, lady.  
 Then think that I am blest, lady,  
 Though aye for thee I sigh ;  
 In peace and beauty rest, lady,  
 Nor mourn, and mourn, as I.

From one we love to part, lady,  
 Is harder than to die ;  
 I see it by thy heart, lady,  
 I feel it by thine eye.  
 Thy lightest look can tell  
 Thy heaviest thought to me, lady ;  
 Oh ! I have loved thee well,  
 But well seems ill with thee, lady !

Though sore the heart be moved, lady,  
 When bound to break its vow.  
 Yet if we ever loved, lady,  
 We must forego it now.

*Marian.* Whate'er thou dost, where'er thou goest,  
 My heart is only thine, thou knowest.

*Lucifer.* Come, I must separate you two :  
 Such wretchedness will never do.

The little cloud of grief which just appears,  
 If left to spread, will drown us all in tears.

*Emma.* Oblige us, pray, then, with a song.

*Charles.* I'm sure he has a singing face.

*Will.* At church I heard him loud and long.

*Lucifer.* Pardon—but you are doubly wrong.

*Helen.* Obey, I beg. Here—give him place.

*Lucifer.* I have not sung for ages, mind :  
 So you must take me as you find.  
 This is a song supposed of one—  
 A fallen spirit—name unknown—  
 Fettered upon his fiery throne—  
 Calling on his once angel-love,  
 Who still remaineth true above.

Thou hast more music in thy voice  
 Than to the spheres is given,  
 And more temptations on thy lips  
 Than lost the angels heaven.  
 Thou hast more brightness in thine eyes  
 Than all the stars which burn,  
 More dazzling art thou than the throne  
 We fallen dared to spurn.

Go search through heaven—the sweetest smile  
 That lightens there is thine ;  
 And through hell's burning darkness breaks  
 No frown so fell as mine.  
 One smile—'twill light, one tear—'twill cool ;  
 These will be more to me  
 Than all the wealth of all the worlds,  
 Or boundless power could be.

*Helen.* Entreat him, pray, to sing again.

*Lucifer.* Any thing any one desires.

*Festus.* Your loveliness hath but to deign  
 To will, and he'll do all that will requires.

*Lucifer sings.* Oh ! many a cloud  
 Hath lift its wing ;  
 And many a leaf  
 Hath clad the spring ;  
 But there shall be thrice  
 The leaf and cloud,  
 And thrice shall the world  
 Have worn her shroud ;  
 Ere there's any like thee,  
 But where thou wilt be.

Oh ! many a storm  
Hath drenched the sun ;  
And many a stream  
To sea hath run ;  
But there shall be thrice  
The storm and stream,  
Ere there's any like thee,  
But in angel's dream ;  
Or in look, or in love,  
But in heaven above.

*Lucy.* What is love ? Oh ! I wonder so :  
Do tell me—who pretends to know ?

*Frank.* Ask not of me, love, what is love !  
Ask what is good of God above ;  
Ask of the great sun what is light ;  
Ask what is darkness of the night ;  
Ask sin of what may be forgiven ;  
Ask what is happiness of heaven ;  
Ask what is folly of the crowd ;  
Ask what is fashion of the shroud ;  
Ask what is sweetness of thy kiss ;  
As of thyself what beauty is ;  
And if they each should answer, I !  
Let me, too, join them with a sigh.  
Oh ! let me pray my life may prove,  
When thus, with thee, that I am love.

*Festus.* I cannot love as I have loved,  
And yet I know not why ;  
It is the one great woe of life  
To feel all feeling die :  
And one by one the heartstrings snap  
As age comes on so chill :  
And hope seems left that hope may cease,  
And all will soon be still.  
And the strong passions, like to storms,  
Soon rage themselves to rest ;  
Or leave a desolated calm,  
A worn and wasted breast ;  
A heart that like the Geyser spring,  
Amidst its bosomed snows,  
May shrink, not rest—but with its blood  
Boils even in repose.  
And yet the things one might have loved  
Remain as they have been ;  
Truth ever lovely, and one heart  
Still sacred and serene ;  
But lower, less, and grosser things  
Eclipse the world-like mind,  
And leave their cold dark shadow where  
Most to the light inclined.  
And then it ends as it began,

The orbit of our race,  
In pains and tears, and fears of life,  
And the new dwelling place.  
From life to death, from death to life,  
We hurry round to God ;  
And leave behind us nothing but  
The path that we have trod.

*Helen.* In vain I try to lure thy heart  
From grief to mirth ;  
It were as easy to ward off  
Night from the earth.

*Festus.* Fill ! I'll drink it till I die—  
Helen's lip and Helen's eye !  
An eye which outsparkles  
The beads of the wine,  
With a hue which outdarkles  
The deeps where they shine.  
Come ! with that lightly flushing brow,  
And darkly splendid eye,  
And white and wavy arms which now  
Like snow-wreaths on the dark brown bough,  
So softly on me lie.  
Come ! let us love, while love we may,  
Ere youth's bright sands be run ;  
The hour is nigh when every soul,  
Which 'scapeth evil's dread control,  
Nor drains the furies' fiery bowl,  
Shall into heaven for aye,  
And love its God alone.

*Helen.* Now let me leave my throne ; and if the hours  
Have measured every moment by a kiss,  
As I do think, since first ye gave these flowers,  
It was to teach us how to dial bliss.  
Farewell, dear crown, thy mistress will not wear,  
Save when she sitteth royally alone.  
Farewell, too, throne ! not quickly wilt thou bear  
A happier form, if fairer than mine own.

*Will.* The ladies leave us !

*Lucifer.* Oh ; by all means let them ;  
But say, for heaven itself, we'll not forget them ;  
Say we will pledge them to the top of breath,  
As loud as thunder, and as deep as death.

*Festus (apart).* Methinks I hear in every sigh  
Of wind, that stirs the illumined bowers,  
A whisper of the immortal powers  
Reproachful, from death's spoils that lie,  
In happiest alchemy,  
Transfiguring themselves to flowers.  
Oh ! for thy grave, my love !  
I want to weep.

High as thou art this earth above,  
My woe is deep ;  
And cold my heart is as thy grave,  
Where I can neither soothe nor save.  
Whate'er I say, or do, or see,  
I think and feel alone to thee.  
Oh ! can it—can it be forgiven,  
That I forget thou art in heaven ?  
Thou wilt forgive me this, and more :  
Love spends his all, and still hath store.  
Thou wilt forgive, if beauty's wile  
Should win, perforce, one glance from me ;  
When they whose art it is to smile  
Can never smile my heart from thee ;  
And if with them I chance to be,  
And give mine ear up to their singing,  
It, windlike, only wakes the sea,  
In all its mad monotony,  
Of memory forth thy music ringing.  
Thou wilt forgive, if, now and then,  
I link with hands less loved than thine,  
Whose goldlike touch makes kings of men,  
But wakes no will in blood of mine ;  
And if with them I toss the wine,  
And set my soul in love's ripe riot,  
It echoes not—this desert shrine,  
Where still thy love from heaven doth shine,  
Moon-like, across some ruin's quiet.  
Thou wilt forgive me, if my feet  
Should move to music with the fair ;  
When, at each turn, I burn to meet  
Thy stream-like step and æry air ;  
And if before some beauty there,  
Mine eye may forge one glance of gladness,  
It is but the ripple of despair  
That shows the bed is all but bare,  
And nought scarce left but stony sadness.  
Thou wilt forgive, if e'er my heart  
Err from the orbit of its love ;  
When even the bliss-bright stars will start  
Earthwards, some lower sphere to prove.  
And if these lips but rarely pine  
In the pale abstinence of sorrow,  
It is, that nightly I divine,  
As I this world-sick soul recline,  
I shall be with thee ere the morrow.  
Thou wilt forgive, if once with thee  
I limned the outline of a heaven ;  
But go and tell our God, from me,  
He must forgive what he hath given ;

And if we be by passion driven  
 To love, and all its natural madness,  
 Tell him that man by love hath thriven,  
 And that by love he shall be shriven ;  
 For God is love where love is gladness.  
 Perchance thy spirit still stays in yon mild star,  
 In peace and flame-like purity, and prayer ;  
 And, oh ! when mine shall fly from earth afar,  
 I will pray God that it may join thine there ;  
 'Twere doubling heaven, that heaven with thee to share.  
 And while thou ledest music and her lyre,  
 Like a sunbeam holden by its golden hair,  
 May I, too, mingling with the immortal choir,  
 Love thee, and worship God ! what more may soul de-  
     sire ?

Enough for me ; but if there be  
 More it shall be left for thee.

*Walter.* If anything I love in chief  
 It is that flowery rich relief  
 That wine doth chase on mortal metal  
 Before good wine begins to settle ;  
 But all seem smilingly, serenely dull,  
 And melancholy as the moon at full.  
 Quenched by their company they seem  
 Like sparks of fire in clouds of steam.

*Charles.* They who mourn the lack of wit  
 Show, at least, no more of it.

*Festus.* I cannot bear to be alone,  
 I hate to mix with men ;  
 To me there's torture in the tone  
 Which bids me talk again.  
 Like silly nestlings, warned in vain,  
 My heart's young joys have flown ;  
 While singing to them, even then,  
 They left me, one by one.  
 I envy every soul that dies  
 Out of this world of care ;  
 I envy e'en the lifeless skies,  
 That they enshrine thee there ;  
 And would I were the bright blue air  
 Which doth insphere thine eyes,  
 That thou mightst meet me everywhere,  
 And feel these faithful sighs.  
 E'en as the bubble that is mixed  
 Of air and wine right red,  
 So my heart's love is shared betwixt  
 The living and the dead.  
 If on her breast I lay my head,  
 My heart on thine is fixed :—  
 Wilt thou I loose, as I have said,

Or keep the soul thou seekst?  
 From me thou canst not pass away  
 While I have soul or sight;  
 I see thee on my waking way,  
 And in my dreams thee bright;  
 I see thee in the dead of night,  
 And the full life of day;  
 I know thee by a sudden light;  
 It is thy soul, I say.  
 If yonder stars be filled with forms  
 Of breathing clay like ours,  
 Perchance the space that spreads between  
 Is for a spirit's powers;  
 And loving as we two have loved,  
 In spirit and in heart,  
 Whether to space or star removed,  
 God will not bid us part.

*Frank.* As to this seat—its late and fair possessor  
 Should, ere she went, have chosen her successor.

*Festus.* In right of her who sat thereon  
 I think I might demand the throne;  
 I rather choose to let it be.

*All.* George shall be king of the company!

*George.* My loving subjects! I shall first promulge  
 A few good rules by which to indulge;  
 They are good, according to my thinking,  
 And shall be held the laws of drinking.  
 First—each man shall do what he chooses,  
 Provided that he ne'er refuses,  
 But shall be sworn, by stand and stopper,  
 To drink as much as I think proper.

*Will.* Stay!—all of you who think with me,  
 This law should pass,  
 Will please to signify the same,  
 By emptying their glass.

*Walter.* Filling again and emptying, and so on,  
 At each law—*pari passu*, as we go on.

*George.* Secondly—no man shall be held as mellow  
 Who can distinguish blue from yellow.  
 Thirdly—no man shall miss his turn or toast;  
 Nor yet give more than two at once, at most;  
 Fourthly—if one at table should fall under,  
 There let him lie—so much extinguished thunder.  
 Fifthly—let all, in such case, who still stay,  
 Like living lightning, but the brighter play.  
 Sixthly—a subject broached,—mind this, there shan't  
 Be aught said that is not irrelevant.  
 Seventhly—if any of these edicts should not  
 Be kept, it shall be good to plead, I would not.

*Charles.* Oh, let the royal law

Be writ in rosy wine !  
 And read and kept  
 At every feast  
 Where wit and mirth combine.

*Festus.* How sweetly shine the steadfast stars.  
 Each eyeing, sister-like, the earth :  
 And softly chiding scenes like this,  
 Of senseless and profaning mirth.

*Lucifer.* Thou art ever prating of the stars,  
 Like an old soldier of his scars :  
 Thou shouldst have been a starling, friend,  
 And not an earthling : end !

*Festus.* And could I speak as many times  
 Of each as there are stars in heaven,  
 I could not utter half the thoughts—  
 The sweet thoughts one to me hath given.  
 The holy quiet of the skies  
 May waken well the blush of shame,  
 Whene'er we think that thither lies  
 The heaven we heed not—ought not name.  
 Oh, heaven ! let down thy cloudy lids,  
 And close thy thousand eyes ;  
 For each, in burning glances, bids  
 The wicked fool be wise.

*Lucifer.* I can interpret well the stars.

*Charles.* Indeed, they need interpreters ;  
 And once, myself, I own, desired  
 To cast their meanings into verse ;  
 But found the feelings so inspired,  
 Inapt, as sunshine on a hearse :  
 And you no doubt will find it worse.

*Lucifer.* Then thus, in their eternal tongue,  
 And musical thunders, all have sung,  
 To every ear which ear hath given,  
 From birth to death, this note of heaven :  
 Deathlings ! on earth drink, laugh, and love :  
 Ye mayn't hereafter—under or above.  
 Yes, this the tale they all have told  
 Since first they made old Chaos shrink ;  
 Since first they flocked creation's fold,  
 And filled all air as flakes of gold  
 Bedrop yon royal drink.  
 For as the moon doth madmen rule,  
 It is, that near and few they are :  
 And so in heaven each single star  
 Doth sway some reasonable fool,  
 Whether on earth or other sphere ;  
 For what's above is what is here.  
 Moons and madmen only change ;  
 What can truth or stars derange ?

*Edward.* Brave stars, bright monitors of joy  
 Right well ye time your hours of warning ;  
 For, sooth to say, the eve's employ  
 Doth wax less lovely towards the morning.  
 So push the goblet gaily round ;  
 Drink deep of its wealth, drink on ;  
 Our earthly joy too soon doth cloy,  
 Our life is all but gone ;  
 And, not enjoy yon glorious cup,  
 And all the sweets which lie,  
 Like pearls within its purple well,  
 Who would not hate to die ?

*Will.* And who, without the cheering glance  
 Of woman's witching eye,  
 Could stand against the storms of fate,  
 Or cankering care defy ?  
 It adds fresh brightness to the bowl ;  
 Then why will men repine ?  
 Content we'll live with heaven's best gifts—  
 With woman, and with wine.

*Harry.* Cups while they sparkle,  
 Maids while they sigh ;  
 Bright eyes will darkle,  
 Lips grow dry.  
 Cheek while the dew-drops  
 Water its rose ;  
 Life's fount hath few drops  
 Dear as those.  
 Arms while they tighten ;  
 Hearts as they heave ;  
 Love cannot brighten  
 Life's dark eve.

*George.* Oh ! the wine is like life ;  
 And the sparkles that play,  
 By the lips of the bowl,  
 Are the loves of the day.  
 Then kiss the bright bubble  
 That breaks in its rise ;  
 Let love be a trouble  
 As light, when it dies.

*Festus.* Well might the thoughtful race of old  
 With ivy twine the head  
 Of him they hailed their god of wine :  
 Thank God ! the lie is dead ;  
 For ivy climbs the crumbling hall  
 To decorate decay,  
 And spreads its dark deceitful pall  
 To hide what wastes away ;  
 And wine will circle round the brain,  
 As ivy o'er the brow,

Till what could once see far as stars,  
 Is dark as death's eye now.  
 Then dash the cup down ! 'tis not worth  
 A soul's great sacrifice :  
 The wine will sink into the earth ;  
 The soul, the soul—must rise.

*Charles.* A toast !

*Frederic.* Here's beauty's fairest flower—  
 The maiden of our own birth-land !

*Harry.* Pale face !—oh for one happy hour  
 To hold my splendid Spaniard's hand !

*Festus.* Why differ on which is the fairest form,  
 When all are the same the heart to warm ?  
 Although by different charms they strike,  
 Their power is equal and alike.  
 Ye bigots of beauty ! behold I stand forth,  
 And drink to the lovely all over the earth.  
 Come, fill to the girl by the Tagus' waves !  
 Wherever she lives there's a land of slaves.  
 And here's to the Spaniard ! that warm blooming maid,  
 With her step superb, and her black locks' braid.  
 To her of dear Paris ! with soul-spending glance,  
 Whose feet, as she's sleeping, look dreaming a dance.  
 To the Norman ! so noble, and stately and tall ;  
 Whose charms, ever changing, can please as they pall .  
 Two bowls in a breath ! here's to each and to all !  
 Come, fill to the English ! whose eloquent brow  
 Says, pleasure is passing, but coming, and now ;  
 Oh ! her eyes o'er the wine are like stars o'er the sea,  
 And her face is the face of all heaven to me.  
 And here's to the Scot ! with her deep blue eye,  
 Like the far-off lochs 'neath her hill-propped sky.  
 To her of the green isle ! whose tyrants deform  
 The land, where she beams like the bow in the storm.  
 To the maiden whose lip like a rose-leaf is curled,  
 And her eye like the star-flag above it unfurled ;  
 Here's to beauty, young beauty, all over the world !

*Will.* Hurrah ! a glorious toast ;  
 'Twould warm a ghost.

*Festus.* It moves not me. I cannot drink  
 The toast I have given.  
 There !—Earth may pledge it, and she will—  
 Herself and her beauty to heaven.  
 Drink to the dead—youth's feelings vain ;  
 Drink to the heart—the battered wreck,  
 Hurl'd from all passions' stormy main ;  
 Though aye the billows o'er it break,  
 The ruin rots, nor rides again.

*Charles.* Friend of my heart ! away with care,  
 And sing, and dance, and laugh ;

To love, and to the favourite fair,  
 The wine-cup ever quaff.  
 Oh! drink to the lovely! whatever they are,  
 Though fair as snow—as light;  
 For whether or falling or fixed the star,  
 They both are heavenly bright.  
 Out upon Care! he shall not stay  
 Within a heart like thine;  
 There's nought in heaven or earth can weigh  
 Down youth, and love, and wine.  
 Then drink with the merry! though we must die,  
 Like beauty's tear we'll fall;  
 We have lived in the light of a loved one's eye,  
 And to live, love, and die is all.

*Festus.* Vain is the world and all it boasts;  
 How brief love's, pleasure's, date!  
 We turn the bowl, and all forget  
 The bias of our fate.

*Charles.* We who have higher things to do,  
 Might well-nigh feel ashamed  
 Our faces in these founts to view.

*Festus.* Of conscience I, unblamed,  
 The passing hour enjoy, with all  
 Delights that youthful hearts enthrall;  
 Enough to know that grief and care,  
 Remorse, regret, will soon their share  
 Of life assert.

*Charles.* Meantime, to loftier ends,  
 I would mine own, and friends,  
 Might timefully revert.  
 High aims have we to gain;  
 Behoves us sure, refrain  
 From follies such as these.

*Festus.* To-night it irks me not  
 That fate to us allot  
 Some passing hours that please.  
 Ne'er can we all evade  
 The future's saddening shade,  
 Our own fate, nor the passed,  
 With us, from first, forecast.

*Charles.* Some other I must try persuade.  
 List, stranger guest. Within thine ear,  
 One word, apart.

*Lucifer.* We are private, now,  
 Beside this fountain falling clear.

*Charles.* With aims so vast and bold which thou  
 Hast for our friend, thou'lt scarce allow  
 Others, I doubt, to interfere.  
 But though, 'neath love's and beauty's spell,  
 Youth lacks true wisdom's just control,

Yet from our merry gatherings here  
Comes nought of evil to the soul.

*Lucifer.* 'Tis more than thou, maybe, canst tell.

*Charles.* It means not. What I would with thee,  
Is to contrive with me, how best  
May he, our friend, the verity  
Of verities,—such through time confessed,  
The truth which men of every rite  
Have held in secretest delight—  
Acquire.

*Lucifer.* I'll see to it some day;  
And when my plans are fully laid  
Will ask your good advice, and aid  
In such designs as, need I say,  
Will smooth combinedly the way  
To ends each have in separate view  
For mutual good.

*Charles.* Agreed. Good friends, adieu!

*Lucifer.* As proverbs say of every land, in time,  
A twig for that bird, too, I'll lime.

*George.* How goes the enemy?

*Lucifer.* What can he mean?

*Festus.* He asks the hour.

*Lucifer.* Aha! then I  
Advise, if Time thy foe hath been,  
Be quick; shake hands, man, with Eternity.

## XVIII.

Graced by sweet promise plight on lunar plains,  
And 'gainst all ill armoured by spirit divine,  
Our seeker of soul's holy mysteries, lift  
By spiritual hand from earth's gross vanities;  
From cruel lies of false creeds; from all taint  
Of treason truthwards, which God's love most just  
Towards beings, create aye capable to advance  
By self amendment, would impugn, and fain  
The fountain of futurity to foretaste,  
Dares, angel-led, by God's behest, to trace  
Soul, in its reascendant course through all  
Heaven's spheres probational, of varied fates,  
Essential man, self purifying, must pass;  
Views gradually perfectible life's vast whole;  
Tells, joyful, wisdom's grand and gracious plan.

*A Lake-islet; Lawn; Garden; Grove.—Mountains,  
Waterfall, and Mainland in the Distance.*

HELEN, MARIAN, STUDENT, afterwards FESTUS.

*Helen.* Gone? whither?

*Student.* Know not I. He and his friend  
Tramp earth untired, or rather seem on wing

Trackless to travel, he, not unlikely even  
 His steed sidereal steers where Cepheus sits  
 Footing the pole ; or where the grim orc, long  
 Death-stiffened into stoniest stars extends  
 His spatial bulk, who once to engorge the sun  
 Three days continuously his jaws stretched.

*Helen.*

Peace !

I prithee, or we, like maxillary feat  
 From thee, may have like cause to rue.

*Student.*

I'm mute.

*Helen.* Let me propitiate one who half, I fear,  
 Distrusts my love. Dear Marian, hate me not.

*Marian.* Nay, I would love thee as of old. Cause  
 none

Have I to 'plain me of thee. With lighter heart  
 How marvel that thou his love attracted more,  
 His we both mind us of ? than mine, grief fraught,  
 Of woe to all presageful ? If I change,  
 'Twill be to one who changes not.

*Helen.*

I know

Thy fine and eminent nature, nor believe  
 Thou wouldst deign to conquer, more than court, the  
 crowd ;

As a sacred river, purified of earth,  
 Albeit bepraised, beprayed, encrowned with flowers,  
 Ingratiate even by living sacrifice,  
 Scarce noting its own bounties ripples along,  
 Reckless of adoration most, so thou,  
 Calm in life's onflow, towards its endless end.

*Student.* Good, were life being only ; but to know,  
 To act, with some, seems scarce less than to be.

*Helen.* True, 'tis with me a passion all to learn  
 Sainted in sacred song of eld, or proved  
 By science now ; but fear, too much, to attain.

*Marian.* And when attained, how cheerless !

*Helen.*

Say not so

To fill the soul with knowledge hidden and high  
 I would brave death this night. Maid, dame of old  
 Partook all mysteries with the crownèd crowd  
 Of happy initiates. We yet—

*Marian.*

See, yon skiff

Nearing the shore, makes, with recursant wing,  
 Surely, some sign recognizant.

*Student.*

Wait. But how

Unless we forcibly and of purpose raise  
 O'er life's low meannesses the mind, shall we  
 Fit us for loftier being, powers more intense  
 Of soul, and mental act ; how brook the laws  
 Compressed into necessities which both rule  
 And serve the spirit world, we hardily trust

To view, nay sometime gain ? To reach and grasp  
 Mind's rational solidity, to construe  
 The equivocal oracles of life, our frames  
 With lives extern conjoined, our spirits with God,  
 Perplexes most, the clearest.

*Marian.* Dark howe'er  
 Time now, like ocean's broadblazed rim of light  
 Mid-heaven by clouds o'erpent, the future glows  
 With glory.

*Helen.* It may. To me, creation's passed,  
 Thought's ray re-scaled towards light, howe'er far back,  
 Seems, than the nearest future, less remote.

*Marian.* See now, it is no stranger. Yes, we all  
 I think that footstep welcome, Festus, thine.

*Student.* It is he, not undesired. The time draws  
 nigh  
 For our most cherished projects wide to spread  
 Their world roots, ramifying, of vastest change.  
 Thy presence was well due.

*Festus.* I knew it. This  
 Fair company, one eve at least, shall well  
 Compensate us for time devote to ends  
 Eyed sternlier. Yes, it glads me still to meet  
 Dear Marian, and thee Helen always.

*Helen.* But thou !  
 Whence com'st thou ? We were wondering whether earth  
 Held thee, or some more brilliant sphere had lured.

*Festus.* Too wondrous and too various charms are  
 earth's,  
 For other star to stay me long. But now  
 Let me not serious converse hinder. While  
 My foot, this fair pavilion's shadow touched  
 Entering, I heard in musical challenge charged  
 Of passed o'er all the future : nearer, more  
 Momentous, was't.

*Helen.* 'Twas mine. Soul's link with God  
 Shows clearlier in its rise than end. Nor seems  
 The reason of soul's continuance, of like weight  
 With that of primal being.

*Festus.* Seems not ? I've seen.

*Helen.* Nay, let us know. Thy strange friend's stranger  
 creed  
 Though simple, of death and God, sufficed not thee ?

*Festus.* It could not.

*Helen.* Oft I think of earth being made ;  
 And here, throned solitary, and face to face,  
 With the broad universe, I can dream I see  
 God's very primal act, when earth first showed,  
 In sudden answer to his thought. Here heaped he  
 Green hillocks gently uprearing like young colts,

Playful in sunny pastures ; mountains, there,  
 Like hoary spectres in the fabulous glass  
 Of world-famed wizard, eyed their shadowy shapes  
 Slow lengthening in the lake, nor guessed how high  
 Their predeterminate heads would rise, but rose  
 Responsive, stilly, to his rational word  
 First uttered then, commensurative of form  
 Fairest, most high ; here, echoing rock and crag,  
 There, the wild waste, voiced with articulate falls  
 And winds, all variable of tone :—there, see  
 In yon disrupted cone the visible stress  
 Of his vast all-mastering hand ;—by bloomy meads  
 Blue streams he drew life-teeming, lakes like this,  
 With baby Edens isled ; traced out the bounds  
 Of nations, radiate from their shelving shores ;  
 Parted earth's hemispheres ; round land the seas  
 Sateless, unsociable as death, rolled ; last,  
 Savage and sacred in all innocence, man  
 Sowed broad-cast o'er his fields, he, sole.

*Student.*

Nor I

Think otherwise, albeit there are who hold  
 Unmade, self-made, this world, or made by hands  
 Of angels, 'mongst whose thrust the devil his own  
 So questionable seem some things in their cause,  
 Their end, their workings. Why are scorpions, snakes,  
 And poison flowers ?

*Marian.*

Be glad we are bid, forewarned,  
 Not all things inexplicit, to reject.

*Festus.* It was God from the beginning framed the  
 whole,  
 Earth, heaven, and into being the angels breathed.

*Helen.* This, and that all souls made, him reverence  
 owe

For their existence, thanks for life, and hope,  
 We, duteous, learn from priest and primer ; learn  
 Faith's sacredest traditions, gratefully,  
 Of life to come ; but what's their sum ? I'd know  
 O'er all things, this : how mind's survivable strength  
 To its elements resublimed, loosed from this build  
 Organic, lives, acts ; how it is soul subsists  
 Separate ; how this that influences, works out  
 Its kind, here inchoate, in loftier states  
 Of being. Not all mankind are heroes, saints  
 Nor predicable angels. Are then the worlds  
 Peopled by pure intelligences, with one  
 Sole, fixed idea ; one changeless habit ; one  
 Act, mental and eternal ? May not some  
 Fall back even in existence, to low ranks  
 And lower ?

*Festus.* 'Twould please you, doubt I not, to learn  
Some late experiences of mine.

*Student.* We all  
Long much to hear. Not given up all to gold,  
Nor merely frivolous, now thou knowst me, not  
To lore mysterious only given, if far  
From gabble of popular creeds, in one ear droned  
By science, in the other by sheer ignorance.  
The masses too, I'd serve, and loyally ;  
And serve them most by ruling them.

*Helen.* And I,  
All natures I would know ; with all I feel  
Compassionately ; in every generous aim  
Join ; prize each pure design art, science, owns  
As elevative of mind ; all projects faith,  
Though secularized, can prove of likely good  
I love ; would further ; pray for.

*Student.* Make us free  
Therefore of these pure mysteries of true life  
To come, authentic, spiritual, as I thee  
Have helped to learn those truths sublime, chief lights  
The passed from all her firmament holds towards us,  
Of sensible use, soul-gladdening.

*Festus.* Not in vain  
Shall any, truthwards tending, self-impelled  
Towards wisdom, test of earnest heart, from me  
Ask glorious knowledge, ye, of all, with me  
Like meditative of fates to come ; who now,  
On mine assured experience, shall believe  
Soul aye regenerate, progressive, all time  
Self-sifted upwards ; which, transmuting fires  
Spiritual, intelligible, pass through, that fit  
For states more eminent than their last, till all  
Achieve perfection ; each in order due.

*Marian.* That every soul by penitence hath power  
To raise itself to bliss, were joy to know.

*Helen.* Sit, let us hear. This verdurous dell, flower-  
rimmed  
Like a green bowl o'errunning at the brim  
In blooms ; yon woods, thick darkening, where, of old,  
Lean solitary, bark-clad, his soul from sins  
Of pomp, from luxury his heart assoiled,  
Prayerwise ; and knight, by faintest footsteps, tracked  
To the hermit's cell, his love-lorn fair ; still stream,  
And sultry sky, all suit. Yon mountain, draped  
To the foot, in purple mists, whereto the clouds  
Their awful gift, as to an altar, bring  
Of thunder, sealed,—seems hearkening : we, with ear  
To nature's melodies tuned, the vesper chant  
Of birds, in blosmy brake ; the solemn lapse

(Of yon white waterfall, just seen, just heard ;  
And most, one voice, if with the silvery tones  
Resonant, of stars not I should wonder,—wait,  
All harmonizing.

*Marian.* We listen.

*Student.* Soul oppressed  
With sense of high experiences so all  
Transcendant, well may pause. For who feels not,  
Eyeing as we now heaven's expanse, and this,  
Accomplished daylight ; lit by one, Hope's, star,  
A sense in him of like infinity, fill  
His being, and speak of equal future ?

*Festus.* Yes !

Who in clear midnight's starry hush shall stand  
On high and heathery peak, o'erpeering sea and land ;  
The ocean-glassed immensity of sky  
 wooing the spirit to inspect its near futurity ;  
Or who, when spring's faint crescent, in the skies,  
Folds to her breast her burthening world of mysteries,  
Pacing some gardened height, or tomb-towned hill,  
A capital at his feet, moon-haunted, noiseless, chill ;  
Ponders those holiest shades earth still reveres  
That have earned, each one, his star, mid yon soul-ripening  
spheres,  
The heavenly state perceptible, powers may feel  
In him expanding, vie with all the heavens reveal ;  
Mind's vast innate capacities, which thus  
Bind in one common chain, the world, our God, and us.  
While lowly faith unfalteringly refers  
To treasures, keyless knowledge vainly vaunts as hers,  
Man still with decent pride may claim to trace  
The grounds whereon his rule of all things God doth base ;  
Whose justice is our justice, and whose powers,  
His, infinite, love and truth, are attributes of ours ;  
With whom we have communion, and enjoy,  
Through rational light, what age nor death can e'er destroy ;  
For soul, with deity consubstantial, feels  
All nature does or bears, each mystery fate conceals ;  
Which though it wind a thousand different ways  
Points ultimately towards God, midst of all Being's maze.  
If in yon boundless vault we therefore see  
Proofs of an all adapting governing deity ;  
Gracious in heart and bounteous ; greatening man  
With sacred gifts, to enjoy and glory in all he can ;  
Ourselves, even here, considerate of times passed  
And future, from earth's prime heroical to her last ;  
May, communing with all, unblamed, conceive  
What godlike ghosts of old shall joy in, or achieve ;  
Nay, justly speculative, man's coming state,  
With heaven's most perfect gifts to him, while earth's,  
collate ;

And meditating the great and reverend names  
 Time's luminous roll, within its worldwide margin, claims,  
 Deem how, perchance, their spirits, in spheres refined,  
 Walk kingly, self-subject; or, with excursive mind,  
 Where some felicitous sun serenely reigns,  
 Lead large æthereal lives mid paradisaal plains.

I, musing thus, fair Luniel from her sphere  
 Collucent, which completes, twelve times, its monthly  
 year,

In ours, with the sun conjoined, and yet once more;  
 'Lighted on spiry crag riven from the rocky shore,  
 Saw sudden stand before me; all her charms  
 By her own light chastened, stand, with welcome-waving  
 arms;

For this with spirit-friends; one ageful hour  
 Brings to perfection fruit, earth scarce had ripened to flower:  
 She, skilled my bosom's inmost thought to tell,  
 Called, questioning, 'Wouldst thou where those astral spirits  
 dwell?'

'Gladly,' I answered, 'Angel! would I wend  
 The world throughout, with thee; searching from end to end,  
 The bounds of being.' 'Wouldst thou life's issues trace  
 'Tween God and nature lawed,' she said, 'to man's vast race,  
 Earth's mediatized divinity, and learn  
 By how steep gradients soul may still to heaven return?'

'Liefer than aught on earth,' I answered. 'Lo!'  
 Said Luniel, 'then, what thou from him wouldst never know,  
 Who tempts thy heart with boons of feebler worth;  
 I am from God empowered to show thee, while on earth.

Remember thou no more, when once are known  
 These mysteries of the world's progressive round God's  
 throne,

Canst stoop to trifle with life's vanities, now  
 Abjured, despised.' 'I make, I solemnize the vow,'  
 Said I, 'and will abide the wished event.'

'Enough,' said she. Each knelt in silence, soul content.

Then, stood. And now the rift she crossed between  
 Our rocks, in ebon shade half, half in argent sheen;

Saying, 'Eye well yon starry arch on high,  
 Wherein the eternal scales of justice cope the sky.

Lo, there the lists of trial; there the fields  
 Of triumph God, to souls in good persistent, yields.

Thousands of years souls preexistent may,  
 In line with laws celestial, take earth's downward way;

Who take, death-freed, the ascent towards heavenly life,  
 Through tests perfective, tests wherewith all worlds are rife,

Are blessed; and these it is mine to mix with: mine  
 To encourage, to sanctify in striving for divine

Communion; and the spirit elect prepare  
 Heaven's feast intelligible, boundless, of truth, to share.'

'All this,' said I, 'I burn to learn; my breath  
Seems worthless, all not known, even parenthetic death.'

Tranced while I stood thus 'neath her fixed eye,  
My spirit stole softly forth towards hers, as midst the sky  
Steals forth a starlet in the gloaming, none  
Wist how. 'Behold me,' I; space-hungering to be gone.

'Rise,' said the angel, flashing forth her hand,  
Which, touchless, mine sustained as doth the invisible band  
Betwixt the aërial fish stretched, both uphold.  
Swifter than happiest times winged we, where meteors  
rolled

Passed; blank vacuity passed, where air most thin  
Nought leaves for light's relays to range or revel in.

Far as in space morn's first faint beamlets shine,  
From those still steepes of heaven where evening's shades  
decline,

Rose we, each breath; and ere the sunken sun,  
Gloomed by earth's westward limb, our mounting eye might  
shun,

One glimpse we caught, our last, of the sea-flood broad,  
Edged with extremest light like the hem of the garment of  
God:

Passed all the erratic spheres, where penitent kings  
Mid soul-crowds, conscience-touched, all grades, all shades,  
of things

Terrestrial, sensual, sinful learn to' eschew;  
Here, grouped for mutual strength; here, sparse, a loftier few;  
But each, their elevance to the All-Pure, above  
Out-working:—passed all orbs sun-circling; forward move  
Till the whole space our petty system spanned,  
Showed like the scattered nest of ostrich on the sand.

'Worlds variable and changeful,' spake my guide,  
'Meet for terrestrial spirits are found, sin-purified,  
Self saved. Who certain bliss, bliss sealed, have gained  
Bide in these steadiest stars, unaltering, unconstrained;

All,—planets, satellites, suns, but as a base  
Serve for the greatening powers of man's divinized race,  
Imperfect, but aspiring through all time,  
Up to the highest heaven ambition's star may climb.

For as a lightning thought, a glint o' the eye,  
Will fruit, through dreams, into a life's eternity;

So, all mind's varied faculties which now  
Nor time's demands, nor bodily need, due scope allow,  
Shall, 'neath God's hallowing eye, matured, expand,  
Those wisest ends to attain he from the first hath planned;  
And sanctify the simplest soul, their shrine,  
Brightening from world to world through every sacred sign.'

While poised, now, o'er the belted clouds we stood  
Of a giant sun, and all its marks, its movements, viewed;—  
'Boundless as are God's works, in all these spheres

One mediate spirit,' I said, manlike, 'allwhere appears.

With whom, I see, commingling free, the soul  
Humane now learns to obey, now teaches to control;

Thy word in all confirmed which first I learned  
In yon orb, now with earth as double star discerned.'

'Herein,' said Luniel, 'view to whom heaven's Lord  
The privileges of power, soul dominance doth accord.

Here, elevated, inspired, and purified,  
By conscience, man's inventive mind, so closely allied  
To God's creative spirit, revises, mends  
Its projects, and passed feats remoulds to worthier ends.

Kings, patriots, heroes, here, and potentates  
Found empires day-broad, march to achieve supremest fates;

There, conquerors haste, with armies of the light,  
The cloud-topped towers to o'erturn of evil's tyrant might;

Toil, with all moral life-force, wrath's allied  
Forces, fivefold to unbind, deceit, doubt, passion, pride;

Wage truceless war on cruelty, and advance  
Their fiery hosts to invade thy realms, black Ignorance!

There, just usurpers humiliate, dethrone  
Huge errors that devour souls; sins, demoniac grown

By pamperings unrestrained; demurest vice,  
Idoltrous; and false faiths that spirits from God entice.

Look, and behold what time thou wilt. This hour  
Give I to thee.' I looked, and, grateful, blessed the Power.

Nimrod, here haughty now, no more, unless  
'Gainst pride, pursued, we viewed, through the obscure  
wilderness

Of worldly life, almost like this of ours,  
Monsters, but now, of sin; and so to virtuous powers  
Self-thralled, that fearing most the popular frown  
He flings, in cavernous depths his loved, star-patterned  
crown.

Sesostris, there, war's patriarch, seeks his place,  
Lowliest, mid chiefs, with joy, captive of conquering grace.

Here, violated states and murdered kings,  
Navé's stern son now counts as vilest, worst of things;

And empires to possess, or land's increase,  
Leads on God's hosts elect to victories won by peace  
Persuadent, which nor woe nor wound e'er leave  
No hate, no heart for theft of throne or state to grieve;

Nor deems, now, God, the all-pitying, could dictate  
Horrors, that merciless fiends would shrink to perpetrate:

But, with heaven's saving help; 'mong those who have  
erred

Makes, for his chosen, way, by one conversive word,

Miraculous. Cyrus, there, of life assured  
Deathless, forenamed of God, by carnal bribe unlured,

Vast tracts subdues, huge zones of doubt and sin;  
The infinite of defect we feel our souls within.

Here Indian Rama his generous battle forms,  
Routs every demon foe ; wrong's every fastness storms  
That innocence would constrain. or help defile  
The spirit divinely chaste which lives but in his smile,  
Her lover's and her lord's ; and, grown more pure  
Through suffering and suspense, love's union makes more sure.  
The youth Pellæan, here, who at Babel died,  
And since, through many a sphere hath expiated his pride,—  
For spirits of every rank defectible made,  
Gain but through time and test and proof, perfection's grade,  
Smiles now, as in God's cause new worlds to win,  
He hails, and aids to assoil from soul-debauching sin.  
There Scipio by victorious virtue more  
Spirits enthrals, and frees, than conqueror e'er before.  
Alaric, here, his lightning legions heads  
Of virtuous spirits 'gainst vice, the spheres o'erruns ; nor  
dreads  
To attack the dominant sins that long have ruled  
Earth-life,—intemperance, pride ; attacks, subdues, self-  
schooled.  
There Xerxes to his will all elements binds  
Serve they but plans to enlarge or to enlighten minds.  
Here, Brutus, Cæsar, there, firm friends enrolled,  
Born social order this, that, sense of rights to uphold,  
With Pericles now unite, and Charlemagne,  
Soul freedom and God's peace imperial to maintain.  
Again through soundless space, windlike through light,  
Successive bars we pierced, and passed, of day and night ;  
Till midst a new celestial group we stood  
High 'mong star magnates, first of the solar brotherhood,  
Where various angel tribes in ordered grades  
Of social mind, I marked, God's law e'er forms or aids.  
Here, Solon, prince of the proverbial seven,  
Heads his constellate seers, the lawgivers of heaven.  
Manou, there, Konfutze, new codes dictate  
Of equity, and between vexed orblets arbitrate ;  
For worlds may wrong each other in thought, as ours,  
Far spheres, with doubt that God them fills with sentient  
powers.  
Here Moses, Minos, Numa, laws decree  
Morals and faiths that now with truth alone agree,  
Humanity and pure right. Zaleucus, there,  
God's ordonnances, which e'en, while drawing earthly air,  
In part, he knew, prepares ; and justice proves  
One with the Beauteous Spirit who all things makes and  
moves.  
Lycurgus, here, his soul-state arms ; and, life  
From luxury freed, with sin bids, heads, perpetual strife.  
Pythagoras, there, convokes with potent sign  
Of discipline perfect, high societies proved divine

By love of concord, and the austere delight,  
To serve by good deeds God, the wordless Infinite.

He, lord of golden numbers, gladdening sees  
Creation's fourfold fount and heavenly harmonies.

Here, Plato's soul full orb'd, the absolute true  
Enjoys, the good, the fair; here, labouring to renew  
Some holier commonwealth, a crown obtains  
Kingly, in the very stars where banished Justice reigns,  
God's delegate. Here, Euhemerus, there, More  
Found, in Utopian worlds, the states they feigned before.

Mohammed, there, God's unity, end and cause  
Boasts of one conquering faith, sole base of rights, dues, laws.

There, Zenghis, here, Akbar God law proclaim;  
Fuse and unite all faiths 'neath one world-hallowing name.

Meet Alfred, Ina here, kingwise arrayed;  
State-rules and codes confer; and now, a mightier shade  
Self-crowned, and matched with great Justinian's fame,  
These orbs with heartiest trust, welcome, and shrewd ac-  
claim;

Who conquering all first, vanquished then, his realm,  
Inner, of law bequeathed, force none could overwhelm.

Swiftlier through shining æther than the ray  
Darts forth of polar light, we spirits our spacious way  
Cleave, to seats lovelier, where the ripened fruits  
Of wise humanity glow; the errors faith transmutes  
To judgments just, as generous; the loves, hates,  
Like holy, righteous heaven adopts, reciprocates.

Zenon, here, Stilpon, Epicurus find  
Fit spheres to sway, wherein to mould the ductile mind,  
Of fallible cast, to wisdom; and incite  
Souls purified to adore the Virtue Infinite.

Here, Aristotle's keen discursive sense,  
Ranging from tiniest life to sheer Omnipotence,  
All things defines, demonstrates Being's cause;  
New moral rules propounds; plans new illative laws.

Prodicus, here, the path of righteous life  
Points, holy, manly as ere, and soul's ennobling strife  
'Gainst treacherous vice. There Socrates, the wise,  
Inspired, immortal, death life's fugitive foe, defies;  
And knowing now man's thought the measuring rod  
Of all things, all things knows, and knows things all in God.

Cebes the tablet there of life mundane  
Unrolls, and pious troops leads towards the Eternal's fane,  
Truth's temple, on virtue's golden strata based,  
And with the o'ersheltering roof of faith celestial graced.

No more, here, Pyrrho doubts; but certified  
Of deity, in his soul contemns all thought beside.

Here, to all wisdom's inexhaustible spring  
His mind, of truth insatiate, brings, and aye longs to bring,  
Tully; here, sifts his philosophic store;

Fines and refines, till all he owns is purest ore  
Of probity, polity, right ; the chiefest good  
Soul can embrace, where'er in life, in death, pursued.  
'Clear patriot shade,' I said, 'to the end of days,  
Thy land's applause, God's calm approof hear ; all men's  
praise.'

His dream august, here, Lælius verifies,  
And with star-ruling spirits, resumes life's happiest ties,  
Eternized. There, the lame Neronian slave  
Basks before God ; and bids in face of fate, be brave  
Earth's trembling orb ; on nature's ends relies  
Truth, conscious rectitude ; still holds those only wise,  
Free, who, prepared alike to live or die,  
Their natural will with God's—so fate's—identify ;  
Heaven's thrall, ere man's. With him, the imperial sage  
Joins hands ; man's inborn sense of God to every age  
Revealing, our own being, misconceived  
By us, asserts divine, and proves what he believed.

Here world-wise Seneca to shining throngs  
God's presence shows by right to sinless souls belongs ;  
Still holds eternal life their boon and prize  
That love God, souls divine their virtue deifies:  
Proves coarsest passions may, by tact refined  
Of duteousness and faith, broaden and exalt the mind ;  
And avarice, even, by wondrous holihood  
Of spirit, be changed to covetousness of all men's good.

Here, Apuleius from sin's gross disguise  
Soul-freed, now hierophant of holiest mysteries,  
The reborn soul foreshows, despite its fall,  
Its self-wrought rise, and ultimate union with the all  
Essential One. Plotinus, there, disrates  
His spirit no more, but oned with that he contemplates  
In vision beatific, sums the whole,  
Man's vast particular, God's the universal soul.

There, Proclus glorying in all bliss to be,  
His soul imbathes in depths of fontal divinity.  
Instant, as flies man's thought from earth to heaven,  
When, peace imploring, God his pardoning grace hath  
given

To penitent soul—a world we make, whence streamed  
Light soothing, strengthening light ; the gates of heaven it  
seemed.

'Lo ! here, the pious priests of every creed  
Who the sole One served ; and pure themselves, would  
intercede

For man as race, as people, as tribe, as soul ;  
No fanes here,' Luniel said ; 'all heaven one templed  
whole.'

'Nor more need we, dear spirit,' I said, 'below,  
Were purity but a plant earth freelier learned to grow.

For not in priestly vestments, broidered bright,  
 And various as the hues wherewith rich autumn dight,  
 Blazons inbred decadence; not in pile  
 Of plate, nor golden cup; in arch, nor dim-roofed aisle;  
 Nor victim crowned with flowers, whose fragrant breath,  
 Blends with his last low moan, in commonalty of death,  
 Lies our acceptableness, nor ever lay;  
 'Tis to man's spirit and heart God sole regard doth pay.  
 The prayer inspired 's prayer granted. This alone  
 Know we. We give thee thine. Thou tak'st but that's  
 thine own.

Nor can our limited foresight swerve thee, Lord!  
 From aught thy heart hath planned, or penned in fate's  
 record.

Nought can we lend thee, Lord! that's first not thine;  
 Nought add by deed to thy felicitousness divine,  
 Save this, to serve our fellow men. Who thus  
 Serve man, serve God. Nought less, 'tis all he asks from us.

Said Luniel, 'hour, hour urgeth. Ears and eyes,  
 More than lips, use.' Abashed, I strove for silence' prize.

Towering mid saintliest throngs, from every clime,  
 From all spheres culled, from the midst, the end, the birth  
 of time,

Great Origen here I viewed, and heard rehearse  
 God's love, sire, saviour, soul of the rational universe:

No longer heretic deemed, to all he proves  
 That all God made in bliss essentially he loves;  
 And if erring pities. Sage in charity, now he sees  
 Secured, the first-fruits, there, of God's great victories  
 O'er rebel evil through triumphant grace,  
 Which, infinite, must at last all finite foes efface.

There, Anius, Melchi-zedek, in one rite  
 Of thanks to God most Highest, the Infinite One, unite.

Theano, here, Sibyl, and holy maid,  
 Virgin of sun, or moon, in dazzling forms arrayed;  
 Their crowns, inscrutable with sublime device,  
 And garlands, wove from flowers fadeless of paradise,  
 Serve now the Fatherly Spirit, whose every beam  
 Is life-light to the soul inspired by love supreme.

'So spiritual,' said Luniel, 'all things here  
 That many a sight thou seest more strange may seem than  
 clear.

But know, wherever the divine desire  
 Of good, burns; heart-born flame conceived of heavenly  
 fire;

Where'er celestial youth may yet be taught  
 Wisdom, or deeds devout of virtuous valour wrought;

Where purity of mind may yet be instilled;  
 Or breast with high resolves beneficent, be fulfilled;

Where holy unsucess, sustaining grace  
 May ask, receive,—there view, be sure, each angel face,

In-streaming strength ; there, every holy muse,  
 Her art now hallowed, learns through all spheres to diffuse ;  
 For God all various beings both can make,  
 And sanctifying, can bless for his dear creatures' sake ;  
 No fleshly god, no man-made idol still,  
 His solitary repute usurping in their will.'

'Kindly as God may act,' said I, 'towards one,  
 The spirit elect, unjust can Justice be to none:—

This, favoured by priority and degree  
 Of bliss ; yet all, at last, must taste his clemency.'

Far faring as an eye-blink of the sun  
 Which,—when some envious cloud, its course abortive  
 run—

Heat-molten, evanisheth—shows to wakeful eye  
 Star-studying, isle or hill snow-swathed, 'neath Martian  
 sky,

In just such time as thought's from thought discerned,  
 We arrived, where once to be my mind e'er strongest  
 yearned :

Where nature's realms with spirits sublimest teemed  
 Elysian realms, most meet for shadowy gods meseemed.

There, many a bard and prophet, prone to stray  
 Mid stars, rejoice to enjoy perfection's widening way ;

The liberties supreme God aye appends  
 To rational souls self-vowed to high and virtuous ends.

Here, David jubilant harps his praise ; while round  
 Concordant, angel strings,—as mountains light—the sound

Snatch, and with choicer art, zeal more intense,  
 Blend with those blessed lays world-broad benevolence ;

In all lands these proclaiming God's elect  
 Who, him best honouring, strive most good manwards to'  
 effect.

Isaiah's spirit, there, winged with fiery pens,  
 Soothly forebodes all worlds, as once this world of men's,  
 Of divinized humanity, in state

E'en lowliest, that o'er death shall yet predominate ;

Of Nature, heavenly bride, and mother-may,  
 By the Holy Spirit impregn'd, pure still as dawning day ;

Man's universal sonship breathing through  
 The spell predictive, once incredible ; now known true.

There, with a billowy grandeur sweeps along,  
 In strains of tidal strength, more beauteous still than strong,  
 Valmiki ; he his gods heroic leads

Through vast emprises, hymns their world enlightening  
 deeds ;

Enfranchised nature glorifies with man ;  
 And animal life, redeemed, rounds in heaven's kindest  
 plan ;

With friendliest Vedists, there, no more the force  
 Of elements hymns, but serves their sole, creative Source.

Orpheus anew there chants the adventurous strain,  
And starry voyage of saints athwart the aërial main ;  
Founds, here, new rites ; and to perfection brings  
The continent soul self-ruled, self-trained to heavenly  
things.

Here, haply, Homer's awful shade amends  
His lay, and powers divine and human, sings, as friends  
Pure and impartial, not contestful, urged  
By fate to fraud or strife, prayer-bribed these, those sin-  
scourged.

Seeks Hesiod, there, in heaven's exterior stars  
The birth divine of virtue, views Time's Titanic wars,  
Of good 'gainst evil—vile Typhonian power !  
Not unfordoomed, nor yet slain in its culminant hour ;

Renewed to happier issue. Æschylus, here,  
Thunders, in verse divine, the same oracular seer  
As erst in Greece, his prophesies of man,  
Sin-shackled, God-loosed, throned ;—heaven's vast triadic  
plan,

For the educable soul. There Sophocles,  
Heart-racked no more by sense of man's mean destinies,  
His lyre with joy-wreaths crowns to extol the worth  
Of immortality's new career, the spirit's rebirth.

Here, sad Euripides, from earth's orbèd tomb,  
Greets all humanity saved ; knows wherefore and by whom.  
Alcæus, Sappho, here, their loves renew ;  
Impassioned, now, those twain towards love divine and  
true.

Cleanthes, and the Pleiad bardlets, now,  
Their mutual love, and ends self-less, heart-oned, avow ;  
In God's perpetual lauds, in justice' praise,  
By practice, they both show, and walk in, virtue's ways.

Pindar, Corinna, Flaccus, now sustain  
With hymnists of all times, a loftier, holier strain ;  
God's love teach, and the prize of that pure strife  
'Gainst sin, Olympian souls are crowned with, heavenly  
life.

Here, learns Lucretius' master-mind to see  
Amidst heaven's seminal orbs, the indwelling deity,  
Not beauty sole, nor yet, for wrong once done,  
Mere wrathful force ; but love, truth, justice all in One.

Joy Virgil's heart there rays forth, as he sees  
The blessed results of soul's abstergent penalties,  
And righteous meeds of justice, most divine  
When, moderatest, her beam towards grace may most  
incline.

To worlds here Ovid still their birth chants ; strives  
Their tribes to instruct with truth ; the purity of their  
lives

Best faith computes ; best worship this, to instil,  
In all souls, love of good, souls self-transformed from ill.

Here Lucan views, with philosophic soul,  
One deity who creates, contains, rules, loves the whole.

Boethius, here, Synesius, sing and teach  
Altern in heartiest hymns the God all natures preach,  
The simple infinite Deity, world-adored ;  
By man, by angel ; earth's, creation's, heaven's one Lord.

Fardusi, there, some angel spirit foresent  
Of God 'gainst evil—sworn to wreck the firmament,—  
Vaunts, and the triumph tells of heavenly good  
O'er sin, the enchantress vile, and all her fiendish brood.

Here Saadi, Djami, there, God's mystic love  
Whisper, to skiey saints their secret lore to prove,  
Sign oral of the Ineffable ; or show,  
'Neath word-veils, truths half hid, souls dread yet seek to  
know.

Ossian, there, hails the eternal spirit sun,  
The deity who to all gives life-light, takes from none.

Here, Kædmon hymns to listening worlds, the mind  
All formative, infinite ; yet in finite form defined

In nature, in the soul, in sacred life,  
In each sustaining force wherewith the world is rife.

There, Milton soars and sings ; here, Dante steers  
His spectral barque, night-sailed, o'er time's unfathomed  
years ;

Though neither, happily, finds, by God's good will,  
Room in his boundless world for endless woe, nor ill.

While each, with penitent majesty, confess  
God everywhere, and where he lives, he lives to bless.

There, Shakespere's spirit, conceptual of the passed,  
Sweeps space, a giant ghost ; and leaning upon the blast,

Rounds many a sphere, notes all things, and surveys  
Sad, penetrative, benign, life's least and largest ways.

Boiardo, Spenser, and of many a lay  
The weird inventors there, all nature's vast array

Of marvellous novelties revel in, nor find  
Proof but of generous power, where'er creative, kind.

Here Camoens and Ercilla, warlike strains  
Alternating with high deeds of courage which disdains

To compass less than conquest of a state,  
Some world realm thrall'd of sin, truth would emancipate,

Him join, who Salem liberate sang ; and now  
The blessed assaults records, and leads, 'neath saintly vow

Of hosts who time's long battailous path have trod,  
To win, as victors, heaven by force, the peace of God.

There Pope's, Young's, Thomson's shades, devout, sublime,  
God in all nature trace, trace, in the eternal time.

Here Chatterton's proud spirit, self-humbled, seeks  
Sin's forged delights to expose ; here, virtue's champion,  
speaks

Mid young enthusiasts for the all true and pure,  
His love; and shows how faith, most tried, is brave to  
endure.

There Maddalo's stainless soul, of happiest birth,  
Springs to embrace in heaven the God he missed on earth.  
Through many an interstellar space, thought winged  
We glide, where broods of nebulous stars their sires enringed,  
Heat lavishing these, those elemental light  
Hoarding, ere on the void, though eager, loosed for flight.  
To orbs, where dominate strange new forms of truth;  
Where age heart-ripening melts in soul perfective youth:  
Where demigods of science faith befriend;  
Their theories prove; intent God's glory to extend;  
Seeking in him, not apes, nor mites, the rise  
Of man's superior life, lost in archaic skies.

With the Phoenician priest, here, deep discourse  
On chaos, vital winds and nature's plasmal force  
Holds Thales; here, his crude imaginings,  
On mundane rudiments mends, and the primal seeds of  
things.

Here, Euclid his indevious problems frames  
For nascent orbs, and proves by space-drawn diagrams  
Truths spiritual, eterne, of import vast,  
More even than all—not slight—time 'neath his name hath  
massed.

Meton here, through recurrent cycles trains  
Star-spirits to union earth's scarce yet with heaven's attains,  
Though urged by many an age. The Assyrian seer  
Nameless, who named the stars, fire-christening every sphere,  
'Neath skies here thicklier lamped, with Egypt's priest  
By Nile celestial, hails, delighted, fields increased  
For astral parables wherein sagest mind,  
Quick with mysterious truth, can loose the heavens or bind.

There, Archimedes finds the point he would  
Of leverage to uplift this world, all worlds, to good;  
Finds in God's infinite will all souls to bless  
The stand-point whence to start, the goal—his righteous-  
ness.

No longer Ptolemy, courtly, celebrates  
Feats fabulous of far stars, but judges rational fates  
By virtuous influences of saintlier spheres,  
Souled with the great and good of heaven's all-hallowing  
years.

New solar laws, here, Kepler and the Pole,  
Wiseest of all who watched the worlds round Night that  
roll,

Interpret spiritually; with finest skill  
Showing how all results must gravitate to God's will.

How his attractive love unites and binds,  
Godwards, time's general soul, earth's individual minds:

And how all heavenly systems men devise  
 Hath each true archetype in God's eternal skies.  
 Here, Galilei shows how truest creeds  
 Truths warmliest welcome, such so proved by kindest deeds.  
 Learns Newton here new laws orbicular ; bides  
 The age-long lapse of years eternity divides  
 With time, in conning new organic frames  
 Of mundane being ; life, here, from ignorance reclaims  
 Heavenwards ; and loyal to his gracious force  
 Who to all beings prescribes their interactive course,  
 Now shows this world how truth with science sides,  
 Now, that ; and like a god in passing, times their tides.  
 There, Flamsteed and Laplace through fineless space  
 Detect in mightiest ease the sunstar's nebulous race ;  
 Through all its varied vastness, and combine  
 More marvellous proofs to adduce of mechanism divine ;  
 How every system faith unveils to view  
 Based on one mighty plan, congruous, one end pursue ;  
 Prove how, too, from one solar truth made known,  
 Godwise, all worship spreads concentric round his throne.  
 Dalton the ultimate motes of spheres contrasts  
 As framed by God's good will, which all precedes, outlasts,  
 Nor anywhere twin atoms meets, to chance  
 Compellant, prone to ascribe their world-genetic dance.  
 Lavoisier, there, the elements of all things  
 Solves, and at will compacts ; and their constituent springs  
 From form crystalline and unmattered force,  
 With delicacy divine, tracks to their parent source.  
 Here, Galen's soul devout life's mysteries,  
 Mid spherul forms more fair than human, loves to seize.  
 Buffon, there, Cuvier, Harvey, all renew,  
 Self vowed to God, their worship of the All-good and true ;  
 Still, study as once on earth, the laws of life ;  
 Still, prove with how exact beneficence all are rife ;  
 Still, youthful worlds teach wisdom, as of old,  
 Earth's sages, truth by truth their holier lore unrolled.  
 Hutton, Deluc, here, Werner many a globe  
 Fire-cored, rock girded search ; bent, reverently, to probe,  
 In emulous love of sacred knowledge, all  
 The secrets God hath shrined in each celestial ball.  
 Linné, here proven in vegetive life still sees  
 Mind ; and in moss minute, even as in mightiest trees,  
 Whose growth is as an empire's—marks One soul  
 Of ever developing perfection guide the whole.  
 Lieuwenhoeck, there, in life invisible learns  
 The infinite hidden, and still, that God, revealed, discerns  
 Who covenants but with life create, by laws  
 Inviolable : himself their substance, sum, end, cause.  
 Here D'Holbach, Volney, Hume while scanning spheres,  
 And time's concentric course midst heaven's all-arching  
 years,

Find law itself miraculous; truth imbase  
On outward knowledge, faith, in the inmost conscience  
place;  
Science supreme of things known, things believed,  
And, faith conceded, truth show as in God conceived.  
Swifter than sad Electra, love-wild, driven  
In narrowing spirals sunward turned, coursed we through  
heaven,  
Until, full late, one outpost orb of space  
We near, and, landing, view, invention's dwelling-place.  
Here, daughter of necessity, abide  
Thy patient sons, till, by success indemnified  
For all their toil, and hallowing every aim  
To God's great ends, they graft on his the creature's claim  
Ingenuous, to depart to happier stars  
Where time all just intents matures, ill only mars;  
Gives to oblivion folly, and records  
Imperishably, all deeds of good, all wisdom's words;  
All truth's thoughts. Here, discoverers of all arts  
Reign midst their several crafts, each skill to each imparts,  
Soul-generous. Here, explorers search new fields  
Of thought to invade; each hint angelic legend yields  
Of holy commerce with more genial spheres,  
Richer perchance in grace, so globe to globe appears,  
Near eyed, and ignorant of the countless plans  
God hath to increase the bliss of worlds; the angel man's  
Powers to communicate, and such means to use  
As, dropped on distant orbs, may boundless good diffuse.  
Here, Colon wings his thoughts to far off spheres,  
Hid in the viewless deeps of nature's earliest years;  
His soul, here, feeds on sparse prophetic strains,  
Compared, of sundry suns; oft eloquently sustains  
His justly reasoned hope that, there, mid space,  
One ultimate earth must be, soul's happier dwelling place,  
In virtues, blessings rich, in gold, and gems—  
Intelligible—that deck angelic diadems;  
And here, his hero followers, pleased, equip  
'Neath their high ensigned dove, the Spirit's celestial ship,  
Manned by their holy and apostolic crew  
Peace minded, who with love all worlds, all souls, subdue.  
Fleet as the mindful glance, night come, each star  
Sends to his brother spheres, familiar though afar,  
Measure to us, how from its central place  
To orbit scarce seen light can, leaping, vanquish space,  
The angelic wing unwearied rapt our flight  
Through rings of dazzling air, walled by untempered night,  
To worlds where spirits sincere, of holiest cast,  
And lowliest wisdom, life in love and worship passed.  
Said Luniel, 'Start not in this gracious land  
Where wider ends than earth's, and loftier heavens expand,

Time's grandest, holiest, worthiest souls to view  
 Still speculative of themes that variously the true  
 Invariable concern ; for not alone  
 Does certainty all suffice ; man's spirit adores the unknown ;  
 Nor paradise to one scant spot confined,  
 But planted once, world-wide spreads various as man's mind.'

As bidden, I look, and every soul-king see  
 A-glow, like level suns with glad solemnity.

There Verulam's spirit mid nature's highest recess,  
 Serves, handmaid with herself, the eternal bounteousness ;  
 Wisdom all potent preaches ; and proclaims  
 Omniscience highest of all the Self-existent's names.

Great Albert and Erigena truths exchange  
 Current 'mong gods ; with reach half heavenly prearrange  
 The philosophic schools of youthening spheres.

Fire-sainted Bruno, there, now freed from ignorant fears  
 Of blind fanatic priests who shamed the creed  
 They vainly mouthed, affirms God all in thought and deed ;  
 The world an emanation of his mind ;

And man's free spirit in God dilate, not undefined.

The shade Cartesian, here, with thought supreme  
 Pregnant, still broods on Being's one all comprising theme ;  
 Still seeks of every spirit from stranger star

The inborn truth all hold, ' because God is, we are.'

Malebranche his quest for truth, there, aye renews ;  
 And verifies—but in God—the vision he pursues ;

In him the sovereign truth, the essential whole,  
 Sees all things, through the mean of the universal soul.

Here, Berkeley's genius quickening all his dreams  
 In sense supernal blends what is with all that seems ;

And shewing naked mind the synonym  
 Of all perfections, makes it God, or equals him.

There, blessed Spinoza's spirit, as heaven sublime,  
 In God finds all extent, all thought, all place, all time ;

And, as a skiff wind-driven some stream to mount,  
 Hies, filled with breath divine, towards Being's eternal fount.

Clarke's soul triumphant, here, to all create  
 God's unity, central truth, inspired to demonstrate,

On high persists adoringly to prove  
 Him, through all attributes, one, the world constructive Love.

Foretuned on earth, there, Leibnitz' spirit still hears  
 The harmonies of mental mixed with material spheres,

And hails with righteous and regenerate zest  
 The eternal heavens as still most perfect, happiest, best.

Ah ! paint who can, the sweet and rapturous fire  
 That thrills the praiseful souls of that God hallowing choir.

Locke, here, and analytic Kant, man's mind,  
 Though limited by defect, yet virtually undefined,

Search with deliberate piety, test, compare  
 With demons, angels, or intelligences more rare ;

Nor fixedness find in creatural knowledge; nought  
 Certain, in scope or grasp of man's most serious thought  
 Save, base and sum of purest reason, this ;  
 God only is true being, and being true, only bliss.

There the great Swede, ascetic seer, God-graced  
 In flesh, with speech of spirit, acts monitor-wise ; so placid  
 That conversant whilst with deathless minds afar,  
 He scrutinises all souls, from earth's sea-glittering star  
 Launched hourly ; fore-ordained to segregate  
 All spirits whose lot is lawed by their interior state,  
 Each to its self-judged circle of joy or pain ;  
 For just proportion e'er through heaven as earth must  
 reign ;

And correlate spheres agree ; with patient zeal  
 Proving to each whence flowed life's sequent woe or weal,  
 He with poetic justice—which is God's—  
 Deals to the pure, palms, peace ; deals to the unrighteous  
 rods.

Quicklier than pulsings of heaven's fiery light,  
 Each wave of Luniel's wing new systems brought in sight.

'Here realized,' said she, 'time's dreams behold,  
 And that celestial life these happier orbs unfold,  
 The denizens of these worlds, Being's proper ends,  
 As pure intelligences seek, God's and nature's friends.

Prompt here, now there, in shrewd and resolute band  
 The all to explore, depth, height, the all parent Love hath  
 planned,

And so, in orbs diverse, his tracks pursue,  
 Old as prenatal night, as dayspring ever new,—  
 Ofttimes, the humble seer, who nature's laws  
 Loves and reveres, and aims to ally with goodness' cause,  
 Shows natural rights in virtues all converge,  
 Conservant of true force ; and so, in deity merge,

Whence first they rayed :—oft, hopeful, here, contrives  
 Subsidiary designs, whence nature, pleased derives  
 New modes of self-enhancement ; oft combines  
 With God's great plans all good, faith, ancillary divines ;  
 Thence issuant glories in truth's flight sublime  
 And modes exhaustless joys to avail of hallowing time ;  
 The evolvment watching of each special race,  
 Exaggerative of good. The inferior to displace

By better, nature progressive fails not ;  
 But with the coming kind casts aye her fateful lot ;  
 Secreting instinct first as base of mind ;  
 Affection, passion, next, as wheels in motion wind ;  
 Till, with demonstrant reason summed, the soul,  
 Fit to conceive God's being, symmetric stands, and whole.'

Fast as the sun-god's healing arrows fly,  
 When he his golden quiver is emptying o'er the sky,

Now in a roseate shadowed sphere we stand  
Where dwell those spirits of grace man's spite once basely  
banned.

'Behold,' my guide said, 'souls that to this shore  
Of bliss have passed through straits of rolling flame and  
gore,—

Souls loved by God and men ; and some not less  
By their immolant zealots now, heart-changed through  
conscience' stress.

For not alone are wrongs corrected, here ;  
But hate, pride, envy changed to feelings pure and dear ;  
Envy to emulation ; hate, to love  
Of good ; and pride, to pride that all in God live, move.

Here, saints and martyrs all their memory lose  
Of wrongs and deaths, each prompt ripe blessings to diffuse,  
Full-handed, on faith's friends wherever tried,  
And with their bright examples adorn religion's side.

These waste no time I saw in vain lament,  
But league themselves to achieve God's alway wise intent ;  
Each acting as with deity inspired  
And conscious of the end by wariest love desired.

There, he of Tarsus, 'mong apostles least,  
Self-noted, but by men Christ's best and noblest priest ;  
Holds it not impious now that man should yearn  
Evil to know from good,—good, godlike and eterne ;  
But all existence, aye, in one divine  
Being consummed views, God, man, nature, one and trine.

Savonarola, Huss, Joan, Jerome here  
For human ignorance shed the condonative tear ;  
O'er man's malignance mourn :—not long ! with joy  
Teresa, Gersen teach how spirits most rapt, employ  
In wholesome change, renewed life's total round ;  
And with high ecstasie blend experience like profound.'

'To souls,' I said, 'of such transcendent strain  
Heaven seems an easy prize to win and to retain ;  
'Tis but to live as ye were wont below ;  
Add but reward to worth ; say, for I trust, I know.'

Guyon there, here Hypatia, Bourignon  
High confidences exchange, each vowed to God alone.

Here Calvin and Servetus, side by side,  
God one, the same, confess ; and in spirit clarified  
This, by repentance' fires, and that, by grace  
Exalted to forgive, in mutual love embrace.

Here, allwhere, too, meet spirits of every strain,  
Searchful of others' fates, good bent to impart or gain :  
Renew, improve their love of those on earth  
Held admirable, or dear, for truth's sake or just worth.

Charles, Cromwell, Louis, here the tyrant's throne  
Friendly, confess pertains not to born kings alone ;

Despots admit of all ranks, worst of things,  
Save mobs crowned ; and that crowds may sin, not less  
than kings.

States 'gainst one soul sin even as one 'gainst all ;  
To each, now godward turned, earth's crowns, how dim !  
how small !

Here too sit they who kings and peoples both  
Rate equitably ; and keep to God and man like troth.

Here, Tacitus, sage of incorruptible pen,  
Worthiest, heaven's deeds divine, of all the sons of men,  
To enregister, with stern but equalled stress  
Of judgment, judges kings ; eternal righteousness

As 'tis in God, his breast-law ; here, ordains  
States their amercement vast of pride subjecting pains ;

Due penitence for war's brutal gust, their first  
Of glories once, now felt with shame and misery cursed ;  
Of luxury, each convicts, and wanton wrong ;

'Fore all, the exemplar sets of virtue's children, strong  
In justice, simple and ample ; in innocence

Unbarterable ; and sweet soul-ignorance of offence.

There, Phocion, Regulus, where'er is heard  
One rational voice, set up and sanctify man's word ;

Word, worthy, in all spheres, of truest fame,  
Self-love, nor popular wrong nor dread of death can shame ;

Well-knowing death nor Hades e'er can be  
Rival or foe to truth and manly integrity.

Here Aristides, Cato, Howard bless  
Worlds with one stringent law, tempered by tenderness ;

Law which to break in thought is sin, in act  
Death ; and salvation sole, to ensue and keep intact,

The law divine, of being and doing good,  
Wherein we are one with God ; the act he wills, we would.

'O ! ye benevolent spirits,' I said, 'on earth,  
Who soothed with brotherly love and aidance, suffering  
worth ;

Ye holy of all ages, of all creeds,  
Truth-taught, and prompters sage of kindest, justest deeds ;

Who fed the poor, the ignorant taught, the weak  
Strengthened to do well, truth to gain, and, gained, to  
speak ;

Your prisoning frames exchanged for the opening sky,  
Continue still to bless, seek self in deity ;

One thing I would intreat of ye, impelled  
By anxious thoughts oft risen from scenes mine eye beheld,

O seek, O guard the death-born soul when first  
Naked, sin-stained, it stands 'fore God and dreads the  
worst,

And the clear spirit, O calm ! that, eased from breath,  
With just one pitying smile salutes and passes death.

Such generous cares God will repay !' Replied  
 One spirit I knew on earth, and revered, to my side  
 Approached : ' This needs not. Who, on earth, the state  
 Of heaven's lost heir hath toiled to amend ; to show how  
 great

The space just right, as his, aspires to span ;  
 More venerable to prove the mind and soul of man ;  
 Make worthier of his end, to achieve the sum  
 Of social right ; found faith's pure simple creed to come ;  
 For in all worlds the growth of general mind  
 Like treatment needs, that law by free rights stand defined ;  
 Rights asking not, as earth's, the patriot's blood  
 Ever, yet everywhere that ill succumb to good ;—

All who have laboured upwards, towards the light  
 Intelligible, divine, since man, in lowliest plight  
 Of glacial age or stone, first crouched the knee  
 To some lone crag, his rock of help, his deity,—  
 Till now, when soul of all idolatry shriven,  
 Thine infinite unity, Lord ! sees symbolled best by heaven ;  
 Revel in joy unutterable and trace

Their destiny in the calm supreme of his embrace,  
 Where, worshipper with worshipped once made one,  
 Live perfect, live divine, in heavenliest union.'

' Live ye aye thus ; ' said Luniel, ' and because  
 You have not sought to divide his own from nature's laws,  
 But striven to spread his realm, the heaven within  
 Man's mind, loved good and done, shunned ill, detested sin,  
 God, to his sacred heights of spiritual rest,  
 Translates ye, well-beloved, his all comprising breast.'

Swift,—as the lord of light's resurgent ray  
 Shoots o'er expectant earth the warm delights of day ;  
 Swift,—as the sun's tempestuous spires of light,  
 Ejaculate from his heart, which daze heaven's spatial night ;  
 To farther orbs,—in silence speed we ; speech  
 Being none, which oftentimes nought save surface mind can  
 reach ;—

Where many a troop of joy-eyed souls we viewed,  
 Glad those themselves, these more to glad the multitude  
 Who circled reverent round their guides, and grew  
 Better they more enjoyed, happier the more they knew.

The originators of every science, meet  
 Here its perfectors ; both their marvellous ends complete.

The patriarchs of all arts, all sacred, there  
 Aim steeper, more sublime discoveries make and share,  
 As worlds and elements, there, more grand than ours,  
 Fields vaster, more diverse yield, claim superior powers.

This one, with fanes of every form, to show  
 One spirit alone divine, made mind, as God, could know ;

This, every plan of sacred cast, ornate,  
 Or simple, or vast, or small, true faith shall consecrate ;

These, him would honour sole in unity ; these,  
In countless forms of life, and all life's energies.

Here, they who temples built by Nile, or pitched  
Mid desert sands grey booths by badgers' hides enriched,

Hophra, Bezaleel ; who, where ocean smiles  
Eastwards, on Attic shores, Rhodian or Delian isles,  
Their snowwhite shrines and fluted shafts combined,  
As purity's sign the soul to raise and charm the mind.

To Pheidias, Zeuxis, there, new skill is given  
To adorn with grace, all truth, with use, sanctioned of  
heaven ;

The soul's most sacred dreams to actualize  
In sinless shape, or scene, o'erarched by happiest skies.

There, he, the awe-inspiring scene who drew  
Of God's last judgment, now, with false contrasts the true,  
Exults in legislative love ; in peace,

All conquering ; and the reign of justice ne'er to cease ;

Condemns his erring fancy's fault, nor feigns  
Joy, felt to meet one skilled to sketch the Edenic plains,  
Fair match for sterner scheme ; and, so diffuse  
O'er time's remembered scenes heaven's own more glorious  
hues ;

Earth-scopes recalled at will, and studies made  
To illustrate saintliest life, Beato, Raphaël aid  
Guido or Zurbaran, Barry or Blake ; their powers  
Used to adorn such lays as charm the immortals' hours,

And happily leisured gods, who crowd to hear  
Prophet or bard his song recite ; or tome of seer  
Turn, marvelling, leaf by leaf, with love imbued  
Of mind's miraculous gifts, in solemn solitude.

Tubal, Timotheus, here, Arion, lead  
Some virgin sphere to obey the air their lyre or reed  
Hath erst inspired a world with ; there, to raise  
On spiritual harmonies, cities, whose walls are praise,  
Of architecture divine ; whose gates are prayer ;  
Whose denizens are all souls attuned to heaven ; and where  
Earth's mightiest melodists join in one sweet strain,  
That peace to express man's soul is maddening yet to attain.

Cadmus, here, Faustus, there, new modes devise  
Of symboling thought unfixed ; scheme how to distant skies  
To impart intelligence ; while Franklin binds  
With tameable lightnings spheres, as serpent-charmer winds  
Worms wise but unfanged round his breast,—and plans  
With Watt, new forms of force for mightier worlds than  
man's.

Here, souls with gifts engrafted that 'neath the chill  
Pressure of want, drear lack of culture, or sage will,  
Bloomed not on earth, expand in this ; their prime  
Of nature, but deferred to heaven's more genial clime.

There, innocent souls, foes but to wrong, hate, strife,  
Speak with God's special voice, sparing all breathful life.

Far as the mighty sparklings of his crown,  
Through space interminable, the sun sends, ceaseless, down  
To watchful worlds, in an eye's glance we passed  
Commoved in spirit, and late ascending reached the last,

We reach where Enoch, Atlas walk the sky,  
Translated through an ever brightening destiny,  
There too the thronèd three who long through heaven  
Followed the star of God, when Christ to earth was given,  
The eternal love pursue ; and midst all skies,  
Humanity sole proclaim the spirit God deifies.

There, many a soul all creatural virtues graced  
Of all earth's faiths, I saw, high in God's favour placed,  
Buddhist and Brahman, Mazdyan, Moslem, Jew,  
Shaman, and Christ's, of all the world's beliefs no few ;  
Gladdening, yet grievous that so oft man's mind  
Will God's salvation deem to faith or form confined,  
Church, temple, ritual, password, sect, or creed ;  
While all God asks from men is pure thought, righteous deed,  
And love of Him, sole ; truth this, one and same,  
Common to earth and heaven, heaven's saints and earth's  
proclaim.

Crowned with original innocence, never lost,  
A youthful spirit, that late, death's reflux tide hath crossed  
There marked I, as, through many a tempering sphere,  
Though scarcely changed, or made more spiritually clear,  
More amiable,—she, with the immortal blessed,  
Up to serenest heights of pure perfection pressed ;  
And cried, ' Blessed spirit from first of sinless strain,  
Time's dimming dust shook off, gladden in thy source again :  
Clear, incontaminate as from God, there live,  
Stern but towards self, thou wouldst all others' faults forgive,  
As on earth, so in heaven ; there, now in right  
Of primitive purity, rise ; rejoin thine Infinite ! '

' Rejoice, thou, too,' said Luniel, ' who hast viewed  
With what all various bliss God hath these worlds endued.'  
' Enough ; ' I answered ; ' all I have seen ; and now,  
As a bird, that travelling far, seeks still his native bough ;  
On Oran's palms, or mid Thessalian plains,  
Towards Albion's lowliest eaves, his sight instinctive strains ;  
Some rustic cot, less lovely, true, than bowers  
Where he with spring might spend her borrowed summer's  
hours ;

But ah ; his birth-place,—I, with all her woes,  
Her griefs, faults, ask earth.' ' Be it,' the angel said ; ' here  
close

The sights thou hast glimpsed of spheral life. Alway  
Ponder the truths these scenes mysteriously convey ;

Not on stools of stateliest idleness,  
God the immortal soul magnificently  
Not, with monotonous viollings, disarranged  
Nature's genial course of ever freshen  
Not he shall doom man's everduring day  
To raptures dumb, or thoughts unutterable  
Nor dazzle with one ecstatic blaze, the r  
That burns in active good God's loftiest lo  
But progress, to the blessed, shall bliss c  
And, to the worst, give hope,—through pu  
Remorse, repentance, self-regenerate wil  
Of good gained, virtue loved, vice loathed,  
For, being is probation. Soul create,  
By its own act, works out its ever instant f  
And evil's darkness, what, but possible l  
The field where conquering truth wages her  
'Life, fire-chordlike,' I said, 'at once, bot  
Truth between God and man, and man and  
And as, in class, some teacher, when he g  
Full seizure of the minds he elevates while  
And hurrying to impart the final word,  
Which shall to each convey ripe meaning o  
Hears,—intercepted from his lips, let fall  
His own conclusive proof, conceived, expres  
So man, long taught of heaven through w  
Speaks in one word his soul, 'tis life he wou  
Eternal life, which midst yon worlds on l  
Feels but due space for th' expanse of its di  
All ours: wherein through nature's infini  
Successive world-lives sloughed, the immort  
Man, finite deity, who in meet employ  
God's will fulfils; and so all duty with all j  
Blends, that in every sphere the spirit me

Whose end is, so to assimilate to his own,  
All spirits, that, love-inspired, they share his boundless  
throne.'

Paused Luniel, and descending, hand in hand,  
Our starry quest we cease, quit the ethereal land,  
As when, with instant impulse, down the sky  
Shoot, on November's eve, twin meteors from on high.

'And how,' I asked, 'shall these things be?' Replied  
In tenderest tone—earth seen that moment—th' angel-guide,

'When, in the lapse of ages, time's great year  
Fulfilled, the disciplined soul, shows perfect, pure and clear,  
All life shall be renewed, and man's great race  
Transfigured, bide in heaven, God's spiritual embrace.

There all God's attributes supreme are shown  
In essence emanative surround his central throne;  
And there, though one, profoundest depths between  
God's and all beings create, eternally intervene.

But whither, last, the principle divine  
Shall wend, like regal heir exiled, until combine,  
Through depurative tests, life's every end  
Perfective; and till proved God's champion, liege and  
friend,

The inmost heavens it gain where, time by time,  
Convoked, the hierarchies of blessed souls sublime,  
Rule and sustain—with him who made—the whole,  
God will himself impart to man's affiliate soul.

Beings and scenes less blessed than these be, I  
Love not. With other aid tempt thou the nether sky

Dimmed by one world, I know, where spirits accursed  
By their own acts or lusts, man-fiend, or demon, erst

God's justice satiate through the burning sense  
Of his pure law condemned, due penitence for offence

Needing, ere lifed again with freedom, light  
Intelligible, with love and conscious sense of right,

Man heaven may face, or any spheral kind,  
Blessed with belief in God and crowned with reasoning-  
mind.

For the rational world God made his mirror first,  
And his own image 'twas, till man by sin accursed,  
Shattering in countless selfs the semblance fine,  
Made unreflective dust of once one whole divine.

Souls who love God, who, here, his heaven within  
Our hearts, by love and good towards man and hate of sin,  
Extend, are they for whom his heavenly rest  
On high he saves, and folds in his eternal breast.

But go; thou, never, till life's self be passed,  
Wilt 'vail to trace his plan divine from first to last;

Plan, which created mind's whole thought transcends;  
Source of its every power, sum endless of all ends.

Earth touched, she, poising her space-cheering wings,  
 Left me, that said, to muse, as erst, celestial things ;  
 Left me, in sacred silence more endowed  
 With meaning, than all words of earth, though thunder-  
 loud.

*Helen.* Silence maybe best speaks experience.

*Student.*

Yes !

Experience of an age may yield an hour's  
 Contentment ; of an hour, an age's awe.

*Festus.* 'Tis nature's silent miracles most convince,  
 Most bless, most elevate the soul.

*Helen.* And yet  
 While doubtless, these experiences the passed  
 And present tend to reconcile with ends  
 Future, still much inexplicable remains  
 Of ordinary existence, and the fates  
 Suffered in soul, in person, here.

*Student.*

Perchance

We expiate here in pains, faults of passed lives,  
 And all our joys are but rewards.

*Festus.*

It may be.

We meet with mysteries everywhere in life,  
 That, could we solve !—as oft, from tide-stormed crag,  
 Some desperate rock, surge-hounded, that, at bay,  
 Faces his white-jawed foes, a wave-path, clear  
 Mid ruffling seas, scarce tremulous, we discern,  
 Seeming significative ; which neither knows  
 Beginning of extension, nor fixed end ;  
 Which marches not with cliff on high, nor reef  
 Below ; to no cloud answers ; no vague keel  
 Out accidentally ; nor desultory gust  
 Scored ; but aye exquisite to the wondering eye,  
 Searchful of all substantive cause,—so close  
 To the secret truth we burn once,—keeps in calm  
 Tenacity, its unfathomed force of form ;  
 Until, the gaze glanced off, tired, or divert  
 Casually, we miss, nor ever can regasp  
 The grand identity ; so, too, mid the world  
 We trace, we think, at times, God's ways, the more  
 Pondered, the plainlier manifest ; but through  
 Fatuity, or mere mutable conceit,  
 Faith's failure, or, what not ? we lose in life's  
 Wide weltering waste the track, which followed, might  
 Have led, if not to perfectness, to peace.

*Helen.* Methinks I too have missed this perfect way ;  
 Else wherefore am I troubled this to know,  
 Or that, when knowing is so vastlier less  
 Than being ? And can it be, I am being here  
 Tested and proved, through life ? Cares great, cares small,

Indifferent, trusted to me hour by hour,  
 And note of treatment taken? It cannot be.  
 And yet it may. One's faith indeed so warns,  
 It is. Who sins against his better light  
 Sins sadly. Still the sense oppresses me  
 Of life so cast.

*Student.* Nay, here are twain will vouch  
 Thy perfectness at least: and 'gainst all comers.

*Helen.* Hush! seest thou none beside thee?

*Festus.* Who is here?  
 I parted from thee but an hour since.

*Student.* I  
 But an hour since parted from thee.

*Festus.* Why so soon?

*Lucifer.* So soon? I have traversed earth.

*Festus.* Ah! good. No more.  
 Let us within, friends. Soon the stars and dews  
 Will take our places. Pray, precede, dear Helen.  
 Enchant—thou canst—thy company—so that me  
 They miss not for an hour or twain.

*Helen.* But how  
 Deceive myself?

*Festus.* Forget me, too.

*Helen.* That word  
 Deserves no answer.

*Student.* None?

*Festus.* Adieu.

*Helen.* Be sure  
 When next we meet, we'll be less grave.

*Student.* Meanwhile

To tasks beneficent, Festus, thou and I  
 Reserved, let haste. Oh, earth is ripening fast  
 But hiddenly to happier ends than e'er  
 Saint, social seer, or politic sage hath hoped:  
 One brief creed, simple and of necessity true;  
 One moral code, in every land the same,  
 Which, justice realised, shall be each man's good,  
 And all men's joy; one law, one general rule;  
 The world one state, and peace perpetual.

*Marian.* Heaven  
 Grant it may be.

*Festus.* I come. Good friend; do thou  
 The requisite dispositions to these ends  
 Prepare. I follow.

*Student.* I obey.

*Festus.* And now;—  
 Wherefore hast sought me here?

*Lucifer.* This but to say;  
 Summoned to farthest space for a time, I come,  
 Hail and farewell to bid thee.

*Festus.* Nay, not thus  
 Part we. I would with thee.  
*Lucifer.* Reflect.  
*Festus.* I do.  
 I would see heaven.  
*Lucifer.* Behold.  
*Festus.* Would enter heaven.  
*Lucifer.* Retire into thyself.  
*Festus.* I would see God.  
*Lucifer.* He is the Invisible.  
*Festus.* And I?  
*Lucifer.* Thou art  
 The insatiable. Arise with me.  
*Festus.* I rise.

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## XIX.

Law moral one and same all being imbounds,  
 Compresses, animates, even as natural law  
 The orb, of light and gravity. Where is soul,  
 There fallibility, choice, and righteous doom,  
 Following, of deity. To the bodiless realms  
 Such abstracts apt, sights spiritually recalled  
 Our travellers tell; of visioned miracles, this,  
 All parent nature sees through, not as God  
 Eternal, but aye immanent in his thought,  
 Whole impress of the all-creative cause;  
 Of world-faiths that, each, itself all truth  
 Boasting, truth sole; its practices foul or vain,  
 Declaring heaven-imposed, to heaven unknown,  
 Save by its wrath. Good will, good deed, towards man,  
 To none confined, in all, like blessed of God,  
 Like honoured know. To man a prescient view  
 Of what is true repentance, to the soul  
 Yet to be realized, spirit-informed, expands.  
 Heaven's judgments are the spiritual harmonies  
 On virtues based, the same with earth's, which show  
 To creatures God's great sceptre justified,  
 In every sphere. The penitence for sin  
 God loves, is after holiness of life.

*Space.*

## FESTUS and LUCIFER.

*Lucifer.* Mark'st thou this vast half-luminous orb we  
 coast,  
 Not sun, not star?  
*Festus.* I note it, and so much  
 Admire I would see more of't.  
*Lucifer.* It is a world  
 God is in act of making. Life not yet

Lifts up her head. Sole, order, first of things,  
Begins to arrange the elements.

*Festus.* There are signs  
'Twill be a world where all felicitous ends  
Designed by God may be fulfilled ; a sphere  
Midway 'twixt earth and heaven ; a common ground  
Where deity and humanity may unite  
Forces, and more effect than either 'lone.

*Lucifer.* Theories so many, and like this, I have seen  
Fall through sheer lack of base, one might despair  
Less sanguine than myself. Meanwhile though swift  
Our transit, time is ours to hold converse.  
Hast aught upon thy mind to impart, or ask ?

*Festus.* My life is massed with miracles. Wheresoe'er  
I be, visions are mine ; and late entranced  
Some angel surely, upon mine inner eyne,  
Life's chart preliminary unrolled, at last,  
Ended with painting heaven.

*Lucifer.* Ere yet expert,  
Repeat, 'twere doubtless curious, false or true.

*Festus.* Right veritable it is, I trust, if peace  
And love and charity are where most God is.

*Lucifer.* Say on. It will while our way through this  
extense,  
Dreamlike, itself.

*Festus.* Many, the greatest, truths  
Man hath acquired in visions, or in dreams.  
For then it is the soul recalls the spheres  
Of preexistent nature, and evokes  
The ghosts of coming ages, or, unites  
Passed, present, future by one windlike touch,  
Which loosens the world's zone, and renders mind  
The master of creation. So with me  
Once proved it, in a vision ; for the crown  
Of nature is passivity, and man's  
Best mood the pure recipient ; in a state  
Of twilight-like existence, as when light,  
Darkness, sun, moon, earth, sky were nigh all one  
Universal substance ; nought distinct save souls,  
Echoes of light intelligible, towards heaven  
Reacting. Matter, mind the All now comprise  
In contrary perfections, as the twin  
Tide-wave inarms the world. Within the pure  
Blue lifeless void, where brightest stars, what else  
Than blackest dust illumined from without,  
Their central fires being self-consummative  
Only of death ? no light show, till we hail  
From ours, or their own ambient : so with man ;  
It is only through their sensuous atmospheres  
That spirits can view each other, or that soul,

As light all colourless, yet all colours holds,  
 By search of Being's supremest spheres of thought  
 Spiritual and moral, which man's nature rule,  
 Can, by that art sublime, the scheme conceive  
 Whereby the vital whole, outrayed from God,  
 His impress takes, and about his feet revolves  
 In everlasting period: he, all made,  
 Suffering, affiliating, inheavening; round,  
 Of effluent life, or influent; this eterne,  
 That, temporal; known to some, with power and means  
 Commemorative, of old, endowed; and now  
 To him who words the wonders he hath seen.  
 It was the spirit of the universe  
 In whose deep breast as on twin founts of life  
 The worlds of heaven were nourished, I beheld.  
 The fragrance of heaven's fadeless fields, her breath,  
 The endless blessings of an act of grace,  
 Or mercy's matron bosom, filled her words:  
 And each articulate syllable she expired,  
 Seemed with the lore of ages laden, as earth  
 O'erheavily with her old baptismal flood.  
 Her eye profound, which dazed so mine at first,  
 I scarce might see, immortal quiet homed;  
 As though all heaven had settled upon one star.  
 She spake, and I regarded with such awe  
 As eaglet, when he first beholds the sun:  
 And though what I recall be true, so far  
 As worded, it is less than truth; for how  
 Can a spar utter how it was crystallized?  
 She spake, I said, the spirit, and at her word,  
 Behold the heavens were opened as a book,  
 'I am the world soul, nature's spirit am I.  
 Ere universe was or constellation, space,  
 System, or sun, or orb, or element,  
 Darkness, or light, or atomic, I first lived;  
 I and necessity, though twain in life,  
 Yet one in essence. God is, men exist.  
 Man and all finite natures among themselves  
 Act freely; between God, and man and all  
 Nature finite, to this unknown, is fate:  
 What is divine is of necessity free.'  
 I heard and I received; and from my soul  
 Intense in quiet, perfect in repose,  
 Like sleep's fantastic frostwork, all the sense  
 Melted of death; and the heaven-surrounding state  
 Entering, of pure existence among gods,  
 It grew ignited with divinity.  
 Again the world-soul voiced itself; and I  
 Indrank the fruitful glories of her words,  
 As earth consumes the golden skiey clouds.

' Two books there are which must be read ; the one,  
 The elements exist as leaves in ; worlds  
 As symbols ; earth, thus, of humanity ;  
 Water of spirit, fire of divinity,  
 And air of all things ; stars the truths of heaven.  
 Water and fire are elements divine ;  
 Earth and air, human ; heaven and the soul  
 From one proceed, and the blue-heated skies ;  
 Out of the other bodihood and abode.  
 Judge doubtful things by certainest ; things dark  
 By what is clear, and dangerous by safe ;  
 And prophesy to all which live of God,  
 Their aboriginal heaven, and total end  
 Of spirit in his just love. Of soul, believe,  
 The other tome I spake of—that man's flesh  
 His spirit not trulier holds, than in divine  
 Nature, its contrary, God's infinite soul  
 Imbounds the universe : thine infinite work  
 But infinitely less than thee, O God !  
 The universe is simple ; God and I.  
 Cause and effect are all that in it is,  
 And more ; for cause containeth its effect.  
 Cause, operation and effect are God,  
 Nature and man ; which both partake of one.  
 Through error human souls accept the truth,  
 As through distorting air the light whereby  
 They live, of sun or starlet. Through the world  
 The soul receives God, but from God the soul  
 Receives the spirit, the chosen thus, thus the world ;  
 The cloud-led many, the star-guided wise.  
 For spirit it is makes times and nature clear,  
 As of old water purified by fire.'  
 Methought I answered, as it might be, thus :  
 ' Life, like a floating islet, comes and goes,  
 We know not, mean not how. From heaven a star  
 Falls, and we track a cold dark somethingness,  
 In our conception as unlike all birth  
 Celestial, astral issue even, as wind  
 Is unlike wisdom, thunder unlike snow.  
 We know but that we are, not how, not why.  
 The distance between finite, howsoe'er  
 Great, and the infinite being infinite,  
 Our life shows incomplete and sectional ;  
 And the large unity of the whole, while sought  
 From morn all musical to blank starred night,  
 In mind to realize, soon, too soon we see  
 The wolf-like shadow of death which shameless haunts  
 With spectre-like eclipse the vital orb,  
 Creep o'er life's path, and threatening total dark  
 The fiery marrow freeze of the vauntful world.'

While yet these words were vibrant on my tongue,  
I saw the sun-god stall his flamy steeds  
In customary splendour ; these, in turn,  
Shaking their lightning trappings off to earth,  
And snatching a few golden grains of sleep,  
Solaced them with their corner in the west ;  
Towards where earth uplifts her crystal crown,  
White with all yearèd snows and radiant rime ;  
While, ever and again, the dancing morn,  
Even in the mid abyss of solar night,  
With roseate blaze impowers the shining skies,  
And pure prismatic fire that lights the stars.  
Stretching her hand into the nebulous depths  
Of space eterne, again the spirit spake.  
' As the æthereal essence of the world,  
Matter thereof mere increment, I of earth  
Speak to thee now ; for, as one Father is  
Of all things, and of spirit all act is born,  
So, of one substance is all nature made.  
Regard not earth as the whole universe ;  
Nor minify yet the orb into a point  
Where all relations vanish. Earth receives  
In an immortal influence, from the stars,  
And out of her bright and generative heart,  
To all conceived and born therefrom, gives back  
The vital virtues of the potent heavens,  
With their invisible radiance filling up  
The interspatial skies. To all the forms  
Of plant, fish, brute, bird, insect he who made  
Gives, from life's infinite estate, renewal  
Ceaseless in mass ; to man, soul-crowned, alone  
Revival personal ; 'mong each other ; all  
Differing in eminence. Some excel ; the rest  
Suffer not therefore. Wrong to none is wrought  
By honour to a high peculiar few,  
Self-meritless, whose sole position stands  
By themselves ingenerable. Exists this class  
Eclect in all things living ; best in man ;  
In whom heaven's motional harmonies, the world's  
Elemental workings, nay the spirit pure  
Of fire impassible, and æthereal, all  
Incorporate are, in sunlike excellency.  
All men, as sons of man, be sons of God ;  
Yet all like portion nor position have,  
In earth, nor heaven : of common promises  
Heirs, not like perfectness, nor privilege.  
Change arts of earth ; the science of the skies,  
Immutable, the first man learned of God,  
Is elder than the sun ; hath hallowed all  
Successive firmaments ; revealed to man,

Whose soul-star inly burns with living light,  
Who holds the constellations in his hand,  
Sign manual of his God, and brief of fate,  
Truth highest speaks, and certainties most blessed.  
Souls these of luminous birth who penetrate  
The core of all best wisdom, know all truth  
Hath central commune with the infinite ;  
All faith with truth ; thus kingly, till with God  
United, and the heavenly fulness shared.  
With carnal minds to outward worship prone  
And ordinances the spirit race of light,  
Consummate in truth's secret discipline, use  
But saintly silence, knowing all, of all  
Themselves incognizable, but souls who love  
Virtue and God. Souls conscious, self convict,  
Of wrong and ill ; through trial, to be proved ;  
Through peril, purified from inbred sin ;  
From surface righteousness ; from faith in gods  
Many and false ; from scorn of the one true ;  
From gross and giant passions ; souls who roam  
Life's wilderness, idolatrous, and believe  
Their record of perfective life their proof  
Of power to save themselves ; but these the elect  
Of nature, peers of paradise, pitying, serve.  
Men are of one kind, therefore, two sorts. All  
Shall find desire unite with destiny.  
For those, as said ; for these, though all the powers  
Of air array themselves in lines of fire,  
And arm them with death's armoury ; though hell's  
Hosts camp them, high as tented mountains round ;  
Yet, at a wave of his hand, like to slaves,  
They vanish from the assiegement of the saints :  
Spirits which, dominations incarnate,  
And sons of stars that darting out of heaven,  
Made themselves mortal for the mother's sake ;  
Here, with original motion, fling off truths  
Of perfect light, oracular even of God ;  
Truths in their minds who worthily receive,  
Of inborn virtue full, accompletive  
Of wisdom ; and like heaven's luminous rudiments,  
Which gradually may gravitate to worlds,  
Corroborate their nature, and make free  
Their souls to course through the blank void of time,  
To the bright fulness of eternity.  
Beyond, too, souls unnumberable, unnamed,  
And orbs all named, all numbered, mortal, know  
These be the great initials of the world :  
Being is one, the central infinite, cause  
Common to both creator and create,  
The great substantive essence of the whole.

Knowing and doing and the fact of form,  
Laws co-existent of its modal life.  
The natural creation ended, first  
Commenced the spiritual, which in God ever  
Aforetime lived, thus time unfolds the seed  
Sown in eternity, and reaped therein :—  
The great paternal and invisible fire  
Which eateth that it issueth, and wherein,  
Being an infinite means as well as end,  
All filiated nature ceaseth work.  
Now matter makes not one continuous orb,  
Nor is light all-where massed alike ; the stars,  
Like thunderbolts perradiate, clustered stand  
Or, separative, seek systems omniform.  
God is the sole and self-subsistent one ;  
From him, the sun-creator, nature was ;  
Æthereal essences, all elements,  
The souls therein indigenous, and man  
Symbolic of all being. Out of earth  
The matron moon was moulded, and the sea  
Filled up the shining chasm : both now fulfil  
One orbit and one nature, and all orbs  
With them one fate, one universal end.  
From light's projective moment, in the earth  
The moon was, even as earth i' the sun ; the sun  
A fiery incarnation of the heavens.  
When sun, earth, moon again make one, resumes  
Nature her heavenly state ; is glorified.'  
As, to the sleepless eye, form forth, at last,  
The long immeasurable layers of light,  
And beams of fire enormous in the east,  
The broad foundations of the heaven domed day  
All fineless as the future, so uprose  
On mine the great celestial certainty.  
The mask of matter fell off, I beheld,  
Void of all seeming, the sole substance mind,  
The actualized ideal of the world.  
An absolutest essence filled my soul ;  
And superseding all its modes and powers,  
Gave to the spirit a consciousness divine ;  
A sense of vast existence in the skies ;  
Boundless commune with spiritual light, and proof  
Self-shown, of heaven commensurate with all life.  
And I to the light of the great spirit's eyes  
Mine hungry eyes returned which, past the first  
Intensifying blindness, clearer saw  
The words she uttered of triumphant truth.  
For truly, and as my vision heightened, lo !  
The universal volume of the heavens,  
Star-lettered in celestial characters,

*Festus.* Again, as a gale of light, the spirit  
Me wholly in her assumed, so that the words  
I heard, like cloudless thunder, wrought in me  
Holy recognizance of the source of things.  
'God, first and last of being, from out whose hand  
Came all things sensible and eternal, all  
Forth flowing from, and ebbing back to, him,  
Creation's God, regeneration's lord ;  
And meet perception of their sum and end.  
Man's Saviour, like his Maker, must be God.  
And, all effect commensurate with its cause,  
Each infinite, creation stands redeemed  
By him first, last, and mediate, God in all.  
Full in the bosom of humanity, he  
As on the waters of the imperfect world,  
Came down, the God-spirit, thus in soul uniting  
The mortal and eterne, and in one word,  
Foreuttered ere all time, which legendwise  
Still rounds the world, though nigh obliterate now  
The best part,—immortality,—gave the key  
All mansions opening of paternal heaven.'  
'Thy name, O Immortality,' here, I said,  
'Sounds clear essential music, through the soul  
Thrilling, as through the heartstrings of a star,  
In air and sphere-form yet inconsummate,  
Its tidal pulses and dim throbs of light,  
Fire fraternized in heaven, yet presage sure  
In hope, of state to come ; yea, round that hope  
So vast yet vague, which, like the northern morn,  
One hour usurps the mid-sky, and the next

Lies buried 'neath the pole, are gathered thoughts  
 And truths whose gravity oft determine life ;  
 As motion in an atomie leads at last  
 To a world's orbit, mote and motion given.  
 For spirit, self-conscious of its inner life,  
 Makes all externals subject, and o'er thoughts  
 And things, maintains that rule which in itself,  
 Is present proof of what the soul most seeks ;  
 Its boundless union with its God.' Then she,  
 The world-divining spirit, even as a star  
 O'erflows with light, still spake of deity. ' God,  
 Untermable in essence, being unnamed,  
 Men grasping ever at his love, his name  
 Man-given, in pious perpetuity breathe,  
 And strive to throw thought-light by act reflex  
 On being, originative of life and thought,  
 In hope to know the great unknowable,  
 Within whose ample essence all concept  
 Respecting it, as good, intelligence, life,  
 Man born, or angel-mind can frame, is lost  
 Like a stray gust, which from some æry height,  
 Soars, suicidal, up the dark inane.

*Lucifer.* Pardon ; but say, this speaking vision, how  
 long  
 Endured it ?

*Festus.* Nay, I know not ; hours, it may be,  
 Moments, perhaps. I was, in truth, entranced.

*Lucifer.* Ne'er had I one but once. Ask not, in turn,  
 How long mine lasted ; mine hath lasted me  
 Thousands of years, in sooth ;—I need but shut  
 Mine eyes, and see it now—and then, I saw  
 Looking as might be casually towards earth,  
 Man's sphere, the horizon black with numberless crowds.  
 Midst these uprose a mountainous altar, shaped  
 Like a vast inverted pyramid, whereby stood  
 Four forms stern, solemn : one arrayed in white,  
 And one in uniformal black ; in green,  
 The third, and of all hues the fourth. And most  
 I marked at first, the two first named. All bliss  
 Each claimed, as his alone, denouncing one  
 The other ; both all warning that fierce fire  
 Burned for their sake who sware not by a creed  
 Garbled, patched up, and contradictory ; text  
 Confounding oft with comment ; by no rule  
 Interpretative bound ; as literal, now,  
 Now figurative, construing laws like plain.  
 Love, said this pair, nathless, from first to last,  
 Its author's nature being, infinite love  
 To mortal man, his motive sole ; their creeds  
 And deeds, as arctic from antarctic wide.

At either side they stood, and pressed the world ;  
And honestly and right earnestly prayed all men  
To serve God ; their incongruous laws obey ;  
Accept of heaven's free grace ; and something do  
To help the Omnipotent how to save a soul.  
And myriads sought their several priestly sides,  
And did as was enjoined them, and rejoiced.  
Then something passed between them ; and the twain,  
Ceasing opponent duarchy, atoned  
In friendship for past enmity, and straight  
Culling all contraries from holy grounds,  
Built up an idol, of all elements,  
Most disaccordant. Thus, his deathly feet  
They framed of fire, of earth his lower limbs,  
His breast of mass terraqueous ; his head, air ;  
Varying with strange and mutable-featured clouds.  
Round him, enthroned on the broad and upturned base  
Of that earth-piercing altar-pyramid,  
They reared at last, earth aiding in all modes,  
A circular temple, patent to the sun ;  
Sea-lavèred ; mountain-columned ; kingdom-paved.  
When as he sat his throne, there rose a shout  
From the foregathered multitudes, which caused  
The circumspatial skies shake, cold with dread,  
And to her inmost base earth vibrate. He  
In his right hand held the sun and moon, close-linked ;  
And in his left a wingèd orb cross-crowned ;  
By his side hung down, curved comet-wise, a sword  
Of fire ; a rosary of unluminous stars  
Decked either wrist. With stars his breast was mailed,  
Like to a knight's of old, with scales steel-gilt ;  
Or like an ice-plant with perpetual dew ;  
Or diamond beetle, round beglobed with light :  
And the unsphered skies darkened momentarily.  
To him was brought, bound hand and foot, the world,  
Which more intensely worshipped than the poor  
Bewildered devotee in eastern lands  
His golden squatting idols, diamond-eyed,  
Whose car grinds human dust. The monarch, there,  
Upon that central shrine where sate the god,  
Laid down his crown ; the warrior cast his sword ;  
The peer, his glittering badge ; the merchant prince,  
His hoarded coffer. There, the statesman placed  
His seal of power ; the priest, his robe ; the bard,  
And the harmonious master, lyre, and pen.  
Who soar, or mine, in science, or in art,  
Their elements and implements and gifts ;  
The scribe, and the physician, and the wright,  
His several offering. Thither hied the crowds  
Of mediate millions between gain and toil ;

Thither the brawny-armed and brown-browed hind  
 Whose wealth was in his will and daily work,  
 Repaired; and earth's luxurious, toilless, tribes  
 Followed; each with his hand full of good things,  
 And felt their conscience lightened; blessed their lot;  
 And all went well, and ended happily.  
 Round that great altar, thousand lesser were,  
 With crowds ringed each, though each the hate and scorn  
 Of the majestic pair who served the highest,  
 And swore to make all souls believe alike,  
 In clockwork-like content. Yet might they not.  
 The many most succeed. The great few fail.  
 Some of belief thought most, of practice some,  
 Some thought of God as darkness, some as light.  
 And worshipped each; some held that space was God;  
 While others said, and wiselier, God is what?  
 Some held that deity, and all heavenly powers  
 Were of one essence like divine and high,  
 Even as the starry commonwealth of heaven.  
 These deemed that, wholly contemplating God,  
 The soul, suffused in deity, required  
 No active virtue, but on God's own breast  
 Lay lulled in glory and in communitive  
 Life with divinity, its best end fulfilled.  
 These deemed whate'er is done by men is done  
 By God's spirit, and they thence conclude no sin  
 Exists, unless to those who so esteem;  
 And that to live without all doubt or dread  
 Were to restore to life the paradise  
 Initiate of the soul, that pleasant place  
 Erst disafforested, and so realize  
 The catholic salvation of the world.  
 Some held that, now and then, there speaks in all  
 The word of God, his light enlightening all,  
 If not resisted carnally. Some adjudged  
 The evil of sin and punishment alike  
 Reflected, if eterne, on rule divine.  
 Some that man's spirit had once forelived in heaven,  
 A holy creature, but that sinning, earth  
 Was its amercement made, its prison, flesh;  
 Emerging whence, it shall by grace resume  
 Its pre-existence and high powers.

*Festus.*

*In dreams*

Doubtless, and reveries, oft, sublimed by faith,  
 Dim glimpses come, I know, of blessed states,  
 And shadowings of power passed, which to the soul  
 Seem inborn and accustomed, as a star  
 To light, when, late immersed, it leaves the sun.

*Lucifer.* Some thought perfection gainable still on earth  
 By their own mean life and efforts, as in heaven;

And that with man it rests to reinstate  
 The Adamic Eden; and, by converse pure  
 And holy life, redeem the sacred day  
 When nature's every work was miracle;  
 When man, brute, angel, all in happy ease  
 Communed, and fruits throat-slaking made good, wise;  
 As ere the immortal seraph-serpent, hid  
 By the sunset side of earth, stole forth and stung  
 Heaven's virgin star; brake nature's innocent seal,  
 And left his lightning trail through all divine  
 Traditions. Some, strange speculatists thought he  
 And Other, were two lower powers, whom God  
 Had pitted in broad duel during time;  
 But that the final victory would be heaven's;  
 Not knowing evil's might. A countless train  
 Of misbeliefs like pure parhelia, these  
 Which come and vanish and return, new lifed,  
 With men unstable; unhinderable of priest;  
 Some grains of truth-gold starring here and there  
 The vast formations of the false. Meanwhile,  
 For meddling with such mysteries unmeant  
 Surely by heaven to be cleared up on earth,  
 Who have eyes trained to pierce the dark, outtaken,  
 These twin compellers of conformity,  
 Erst marked, condemned from time to time to hell,  
 Rack, massacre and fire, each bubble sect  
 That in full-blown emptiness rose, to show their own  
 Familiar, brotherly, charity, and so prove  
 The inspiration theirs they claim of God,  
 Who tells all, he is love. Those sects themselves,  
 Full of molecular motion, fought like mites  
 Which fill a water-drop, and day by day  
 Cursed or consumed each other. For the rest,  
 Who stood round the great altar muttering creeds,  
 And each had his dissenting heretics,  
 The third smote simply by the sword who dared  
 His chequered tale, not wholly truth nor lie  
 Doubt, but suspended 'twixt, as utter void  
 Baseless. The fourth, more meek in general mood,  
 Willed ignorantly, both true and false, 'like scorned,  
 To tolerate. Now and then he closed his eyes  
 Wrathful, and slew promiscuously all round.

*Festus.* Much doubtless may be meant in that thou  
 hast seen.

A sacred side there is to everything,  
 As given or else forbidden, as false or true,  
 According to the greater truth involved;  
 One side is always bright, one always dark,  
 Leaflike and moonlike; and each separate life  
 Is as a leaf which waits the quickening breath

Of nature, our mysterious prophetess,  
 To give 't due place and order in the world.  
 Heights too there are profound, and depths sublime  
 Of thought, faith sole can deal with ; for as God's  
 True name, if known, is uttered not in heaven  
 Highest, nor on earth, so deeps unnameable are  
 Which cannot be revealed of human life,  
 And ought not if they could ; the elements  
 Of the premortal manhood which inhered  
 In the conception of creative mind,  
 Since shown to few, and only dimly known.

*Lucifer.* The spirit thou namest, then, showed thee  
 not these things ?

*Festus.* Continue ; if thy vision more unveiled  
 Thou wouldst impart, or me behoves to know.

*Lucifer.* Modes next I marked of practice, rite and form,  
 Strangest of human trusts : here, some would burn  
 There, others, drown, these maim, those clamm themselves  
 Or fellows, all in proof of piety ;  
 Some sacrificed their children, some their sires ;  
 Some fruits, some flowers ; beasts and the young of beasts,  
 In honest obstinate hope of earning heaven.  
 Others heaped stone on stone, shrine piled on shrine,  
 In emulous mimicry of the threefold heavens ;  
 Silver inlaid with gold, gold decked with gem ;  
 Others dug out the earth and worshipped fumes,  
 Or paid respect to vapours which inhaled  
 Bred holiest inspiration ; some in warm  
 And reeking entrails read the signs of God,  
 Or deemed they did, prophetic : others sun,  
 Moon, stars, those fixed or wandering those,—adored,  
 For spiritual good thence down-drawn ; earth-born fire  
 Or sun-born ; rivers, mountains, seas, stones, herbs,  
 Brute, insect, bird, fish ; earth and air and man ;  
 All these were sworn by, prayed to, in the wild  
 Sad faith that man's humanity, by them,  
 Could gain some earnest of divinity.  
 Some only ate of certain meats, or laid  
 Under dread ban, all flesh and milk and wine ;  
 Extolling green food and the sparkling spring,  
 As though brutes only spiritually lived,  
 And virtue were a vegetable thing.  
 Others wore iron spikes around their waists,  
 Burned fire in their bosoms ; with their bread  
 Mixed dust and filth, ate grass, and naked lived ;  
 Or crawled for leagues like serpents in the dust  
 In sign of self abasement ; sign indeed  
 Not lacked, where proof of fact much overabounds.  
 Still, for I hasten now to close the tale  
 Of those who thus believed, thus acted, still,

Whene'er I looked around me, hour by hour,  
 The multitudes departed, yet increased.  
 But one way came they ; countless ways they quit,—  
 Through age, birth, pestilence, vice and folly and war ;  
 Disease, excess, woe, famine, sin and fate ;—  
 The city of life, twelve gated ; gazing thus,  
 Priest, altar, crowd, god, all I seem to have seen,  
 Vanish, and are no more ; till some near day,  
 When I would see again the earth, and lo !  
 The vision all recurs in orderly lapse ;  
 From end to end, parts special only changed.

*Festus.* 'Tis strange, tis sad, and if I now with man  
 Conversed, I'd say that spirit and nature known  
 To act contrarious, yet by God's grace, tend  
 To ultimate harmony, seeming being opposed  
 To being in seeming only ; rises earth  
 Sunwards, not sun on earth ; yet let not man  
 Deem creatural elevance into heaven his right,  
 By force of reason, or end necessitate  
 Of nature truthwards. So, through life God, sought  
 By act divinely voluntary illumines  
 Sunwise, the world of soul. Even here, i' the pure  
 Black, unbeing void, where but for light of stars  
 Lit by God's vital hand—the brightest star  
 But blackest dust illumined from without,  
 Their central fires their death-source sole,—not life  
 Could be nor mutual influence ; so with man ;  
 It is only through their sensuous atmospheres  
 Spirits can behold each other ; and as light  
 Which, colourless, all colours holds, by such  
 Becomes itself enlightening, so, too, soul,  
 Dowered inly with all varieties of belief,  
 Born in itself to realize all time,  
 By search of Being's supremest spheres of thought  
 Moral and rational, which rule man's life,  
 Learns, while the universe revolves round God  
 In everlasting period, and the world  
 Spiritual within, enlightened inly, how  
 By sweet attraction towards its source, his love,  
 Balanced by upward gravity of the whole  
 Towards his divine perfections, he, himself,  
 Conceiving, bearing, suffering, ending all,  
 Affiliates finally, and inheavens. For thus  
 To me appeared the sign the spirit now gave.

*Lucifer.* But though man knows not absolutely, at large,  
 His God, nor many have been in spirit rapt  
 To heaven ; yet hell to outdo in mutual hate,  
 And threats reciprocal of quenchless fire,  
 For speculative creeds, earth's foulest crimes

Held easily expiable, seems gross misprise  
Of heavenly justice, and God's tolerance.

*Festus.*

Seems !

Behold now heaven, the spirit exclaimed, and I  
One vast and universal heaven behold ;  
God's world-pervading and perpetual smile,  
Which, harmonizing, lights all, all light o'erspreads.  
There everything hath life, the elements  
All vitalized, and glorified, and named  
Love, wisdom, strength and beauty, and all hues  
Which nature owns, from earth's original blush,  
To heaven's eternal azure, hallowed are ;  
There sentient clouds, the delicate chariots oft  
Of journeying souls, inspired by musical winds,  
Winds fragrant as the breath of deity, shed  
Grateful, their choicest effluence round the skies.  
There, spirit exalting joys abide ; there flow  
The fountains of eternal life and streams  
Of perfect virtue for soul-baptism ; there,  
Roll faith's abysmal mysteries, darkly clear ;  
Though soundless, shoreless, luminous with life,  
Tempting to be explored. There, grow the groves,  
Whose trees of golden boles and pearly fruits  
Breathe, as wind moved, the harmonious lauds of souls,  
Freed from the illusions of more mortal spheres.  
Cities and fanes of diamond crown the hills,  
Bright with the sole companionship of heaven,  
In this pre-earthly paradise, wherein  
Who enter are, by kindest angels, clad  
In garments wrought of rainbows ; and in robes  
Woven as of sunset clouds ; while viny wreaths  
Gemberries bearing, form their coronals,  
Exuberant of all fruitage. Food they need not  
Who live on life, and quaff eternal joy ;  
And rest in peace as in the down of doves.  
There, many pass all time, the hour of God,  
In pure and whole contentment. Others, still,  
In ceaseless, boundless progress, as from star  
To star, from bliss to bliss pass, until all  
Like rays of light, light all attractive, all  
Delightful light redeemed up to the sun,  
Return to God renewed. In one band, there,  
Souls of all faiths, earth-holden, gracious live,  
In mutual forgiveness blessing each  
The other ; what too in their several creeds  
Is proved false, each casts off ; what true all keep,  
Uniting and amending, for in all  
Was truth, if most in one. Thy soul it joys  
She said, the spirit, to see this. Search thy heart ;  
Search, wouldst thou enter these abodes, and know

There is a secret sign, whereby the soul  
 Feels certainty of safety and of power  
 Imparted, public to the universe,  
 By a single world unwist of, but to one  
 Conscious of soul's divinity a sign  
 Infallible, of the life immortal; sign  
 Stamped in the spirit, as is the gleaming seal  
 Thou sawest on brows of those imparadised,  
 The true, trilateral monogram of God.  
 I searched, and in my vision deemed I found.  
 But what avails it now?

*Lucifer.* Aught said she more?

*Festus.* What need the spirit more speak? No more  
 I heard.

She ceased, the all-create; and gazing down deep,  
 As into her own breast, she crossed in peace  
 O'er that abyss her life embracing arms.  
 She ceased; and all was silence. Earth and heaven,  
 Like solar seas unfathomably bright,  
 Rolled forth their inmost radiance in twin tides,  
 Immeasurable. Since the first begotten day,  
 Until the last born eve when all shall end,  
 And life's great vein within the embosoming skies  
 Be utterly dried up; till night shall come,  
 As some cloud-monster eats up, star on star,  
 The children of the light; till dew no more  
 Shall freshen earth's lip, nor breeze her breast, hath been  
 Beheld such glory, nor shall be, nor may,  
 Of nature serving God; she sibyl-like,  
 Instinct with inspiration, and he her  
 Endowing with all bliss unendingly.

*Lucifer.* The universe is but the gate of heaven.  
 See from this highest orb, the crown of space  
 And footstool to the infinite, thou may'st gain  
 Already, a glimpse of glory unconceived.

*Festus.* See how yon angels stretch their shining arms,  
 Wave their star-haunting wings which gleam like glass,  
 And locks that look like morning's when she comes  
 Triumphant in the east. Is this their joy  
 O'er some world penitent?

*Lucifer.* Lo! there it rides;  
 Blessed to discharge on heaven's all peaceful shores  
 Its long accumulated load of life;  
 Its deathless freight, pilgrims of time and space.  
 Yon guilty orb, of hesitating light,  
 Slow looming there on its dark path, goes up  
 At the hour forewritten, as do all worlds, to God,  
 To judgment; and the earthquake groans I hear,  
 Which rend its adamant breast forebode  
 Its agonizing doom.

*Festus.* And grieves not heaven  
With world or soul lost, as with saved it joys ?

*Lucifer.* How may mortals mourn at the decree  
Of righteous wisdom, in itself to them  
A bliss to view, being infinite ? Is't not just  
That justice should be realized ? And there,  
See one example in the skies prepared,  
To admonish and remind of that's to come.

*Festus.* But why repented it not, in time ?

*Lucifer.* Perchance  
It held not penitence needed ; what, if proud,  
It recked not ? Time, maybe, is for it, yet.  
Ask of the spirit of the world.

*Festus.* I dare not.

*Lucifer.* What unto us is time, stands before God  
Eternity. Repentance is the grief  
For, and effectual abstinence from sin,  
Creatures can scarce attain to, without God ;  
But with him all is feasible.

*Festus.* Cloudy and clear  
By turns, thy words as heaven. I know not what  
To think, nor how to act.

*Lucifer.* It is natural. Who  
Can hit but as appointed him ? Who aim,  
But as permitted ? God gives all their ground ;  
Bow, arrow, mark, prize, eye and arm, and all ;  
All life's conditions, origin, means and end.  
Forefixed of God his fates revealed as hid  
In words till now concealed of prophet truth,  
Under the buried basements of the skies,  
Shall yet, I have heard, o'erthrown these, reappear.

*Festus.* I seek not of man's fate now. I seek God.  
All heavens exterior passed, the seats of soul  
Self-purificative, and probational, me  
Heaven's threshold now—even where yon radiant sun  
Of suns, sphere central and supreme of space,  
The aspirant soul forewarns of holier life,  
And aims more spiritual than mixed earth needs,  
Immediate most to deity,—me attracts  
With irresistible force.

*Lucifer.* Thereto we tend.  
Meanwhile glance downwards from this world-coping,  
Ere higher risen, and know that to the extreme  
Of utter space, where not an atomie mars  
The void invisible, easier 'twere to cast  
A lead, and total its velocity ; pierce  
All space, nor cross light's path, than fathom man's  
Dark heart, or sound the hollows of his soul.

*Festus.* Whether the greater sinner, that mean na'  
All these life-spheres which dominates, or thou

The spirit of evil, archfoe of God and doomed,  
One day to perish within the eternal fire  
Of his wrath, even in deity thus, in whom  
As they begin may all things end, I know not.  
I only feel God loves but perfectly,  
And can, his own, the spirit of good. And now !  
Listen ! I hear the harmonies of heaven  
From sphere to sphere and from the boundless round,  
Re-echoing bliss to those serenest heights  
Where angels sit and strike their emulous harps,  
Wreathed round with flowers and diamonded with dew ;  
Such dew as gemmed the ever during blooms  
Of Eden winterless, or as, night by night,  
The tree of life wept from its every leaf,  
Unwithering. Now, in solemn lapse, I hear  
The music of the murmur of the stream  
Which, through the bridal city of the Lord,  
Floweth all life for ever ; nay, catch the breath,  
Through its star-shadowing branches, of that tree  
Transplanted now to heaven, but once on earth,  
Whose fruit is for all beings,—breathed of God.  
Oh, breathe on me, inspiring spirit-breath !  
Oh, flow to me, ye soul-reviving waves !  
Freshen the fading spirit that droops and dies.  
*Lucifer.* It is plain that, here, what man craves, God  
hath willed.

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## XX.

Enter now heaven. Even man's deathly life  
 May be there by God's leave. Once brought to God,  
 The soul's probation and foredoom, and heaven's  
 Designs towards man, whole man, man personal, show,  
 Fuller by light of love parental. There,  
 God's will shall be our own ; all spirits be his.  
 A lightning revelation of the heavens,  
 And heavenly life, by spirit whose highest aim  
 Was lowliest to adore the All-good, mistold  
 Of old, and ever by truthless tongues ; to adore  
 The unity essential, formless, sole  
 Of God the All-sire of being, source and end ;  
 And though less hard to shape, o'er air's bright heights,  
 The wide winged wind, he will forgive who owns  
 Names like the Zealous, like the Merciful ; we,  
 This moment, and all life, all soul, all spirit,  
 Mind, matter, being as much within his presence,  
 And known through, like a glass film in the sun,  
 As though we stood within the star-stoned courts  
 Of his celestial city. Where he is,  
 He is all. There are no degrees in deity.  
 Earth's final doom, man's triumph, peace supreme,  
 Foreshown, illative each of other's end.

*Heaven.*

THE DEITY, ANGELS, GUARDIAN ANGEL. FESTUS  
*and LUCIFER entering.*

*Archangels.* Infinite God ! thy will is done,  
 The world's last sand is all but run,  
 The night is feasting on the sun.

*Lucifer.* All being God ! I come to thee again ;  
 Nor come alone. Mortality is here.  
 Thou badest me do my will, and I have dared  
 To do it. I have brought him up to heaven,  
 That thou, just judge, mayst judge 'twixt him and me.

*God.* Thou canst not do what is willed not to be.  
 Suns are made up of atoms ; heaven, of souls ;  
 And souls and suns are but the atomies  
 Of the body, I God, indwell : the natural form  
 Of mine infinite essence.

*Lucifer.* Mortal, here  
 Await, the while I parley fate.

*Guardian Angel.* Why, now,  
 Spirit of ill, rufflest heaven's calm ?

*Lucifer.* I will say.  
 Is not this creature by successful wile  
 Yet mine ? Have I not caused him waste his years  
 In search of lore forbidden, forgot ? in chase

Of intermittent dreams philosophy gives  
 Brief brain-life to, and vague, of wisdom housed  
 'Mong men, and virtue homed ;—realities vain  
 Such as the eye, true key of heaven, shapes forth  
 Imaginative, from shifting clouds ; essays  
 Futile to o'erflesh with sense the iron limbs  
 Cold science moulds, irreverent ; or win wealth,—  
 Of labour liberal most,—his hoards to impart,  
 Common as air ;—what rights have idiot men  
 To quarter any element ?—to the mass. Who life,  
 God's best gift, wastes in quests irrational, plans  
 Immoderately benevolent, although fair  
 His final aims, sins grossly even as wight  
 Who from air's aureate mists would wring out gold,  
 Or from seas silver, and his charity stake  
 On success, clammed meanwhile his poor.

*Guardian Angel.* Of good's  
 Least sparkle God is thrifty. Wish and will,—

*Lucifer.* To wish is weakness, mind's strength is to  
 will—

*Guardian Angel.* Ends sometimes solid enough beget,  
 as deeds.

*Lucifer.* Solidity alas thy charge and thou  
 Alike lack. Prime in the precipitate reel  
 Poor Pleasure nightly leads, nought pressed, on earth  
 More sadly frivolous, headlong whirls this soul.  
 Rich, saidst thou, in time's coming honours ? grave  
 That should be, with predestined empire's trust ?  
 Heaven's hope ? My pampered slave's arch drudge.

*Guardian Angel.* Youth's powers,  
 Life's happier gifts, time's privileges, the heart's  
 Spring-growth of love, joy-fraught, may e'er be used,  
 And innocently, even not with views forestrained  
 To the end of being. Man's pleasure in the world,—  
 His nature made to each fit,—theirs except,  
 Who twilight sense of future heaven command,  
 And promissory being yet unfulfilled,  
 Sense glorious seeming still to the stone-blind mass,—  
 Is born of socialty ; but in the eterne,  
 Such joys as vanities smirch not, love of self  
 Degrades not, folly fouls not, God redeems,  
 Renews ; to all adds his own love and grace,  
 Which keeps them sealike pure, and in godly will  
 Incorrupt. Thus, if not in pleasurable life,  
 God's bliss and man's rises, unites, and ends  
 In self, in deity, who nor motive, good  
 Nor end knows, other than himself. Thou err'st  
 If therefore, him thou deem'st almost thine, thine  
 By weight accumulate of mere levities. These  
 Ruin not for aye. Even now this soul hath learned

Revulsive to hate vanity, hate the show  
 Of luxuries and the idlesse of the world  
 Thou lurest with. Pause! yon constellated scales  
 Pendent in heaven, whose weights are worlds one soul  
 Outworths; balanced therein life's well and ill  
 Show level, as falcon's wings, through every plume  
 Strained air respiring delicately. What yet,  
 Imponderable, but all decisive, life's  
 Brief lapse may add, thou knowest not.

*Lucifer.* This I know,

Wide fields be mine yet, many a vowed ally;  
 Aids irresistible; helldom's strength I'll stretch  
 To touch mine end. Nor public rite, belief  
 Nor tenet utterable, shall all content  
 The aspiring spirit like earnest to explore  
 Earth's farthest, space's highest. It is his will  
 Power's trustiest aids to learn, truth's inmost shrine,  
 Felicitative of soul. He the heart inane  
 Would now of mystery pierce, the maze where eld's  
 Misfaiths, with heresies new in endless round  
 Err; and he may, by commerce of false creeds  
 Chafing away the impress divine of God.  
 Presumptuous pride falls quickly.

*Guardian Angel.* He shall not.

God through me speaks.

*God.* What wouldst thou, Lucifer,

With him thou hast brought here with thee?

*Lucifer.* Show him God.

*God.* No being on part of whom death's curse, though  
 now

Transfigured into blessing, were it only  
 Upon his shadow, looks on God and lives.

*Lucifer.* Look, Festus, look.

*Festus.* God, sole and onemost; God,

Eternal fountain of the infinite, thou  
 On whose life-tide the stars seem strown like bubbles,  
 Forgive me that an atomie of being  
 Hath sought to see its Maker, face to face.  
 I have viewed all thy works, thy wonders; passed  
 From star to star, from space to space, and feel  
 That all to see which can be seen were nothing,  
 And not to look upon thee, the invisible.  
 The spirits I met all seemed to say, as on,  
 Starwards, they sped,—their lightning wings o'er me  
 One moment slackening,—with superior glance,  
 I might not look, whate'er I were, on God:  
 But thou this spirit beside me didst empower  
 To make me more than them, with gifts immortal;  
 So when we had winged through thy wide world of things  
 And marked stars made and saved, destroyed and judged,

I said, and trembled lest thou heardst me not,  
Nor madest thyself right ready to forgive,  
I would see God before I die in heaven.  
Forgive me, Lord.

*God.* Mortal, rise. Look on me.

*Festus.* Nought  
Unless like dazzling darkness, see I.

*Lucifer.* Good.  
I knew how it would be. I am away.

*Festus.* Thy creature, God! am I. O slay me not;  
But bid some angel take me, or I die.

*Guardian Angel.* Come hither, Festus!

*Festus.* Who art thou?  
*Guardian Angel.* I am one

Who hath aye, till late, been by thee from thy birth,  
Thy guardian genius, thy good angel, I.

*Festus.* I knew thee not till now.

*Guardian Angel.* I am never seen  
In the earth's low thick light; but here, in heaven,  
And in the air God breathes, I, too, am clear.

Withheld from active charge on earth, that God's  
Ends, by yon spirit late challenged, might show plain  
In his own eyes, I have here sojourned; and now,  
Leave asked of God, in view of all to come,  
And separation's ends, accomplished, seek,—  
Telling to God each night thy thoughts and deeds,  
And watching o'er thee on earth, as here,—again  
To attend thee through thy life-time. Pray for me,  
As I for thee pray daily and intercede.

*Festus.* Hear, Lord, the prayers of man and angel oned.  
And this is heaven. Lead on. Will God forgive  
That I did long to see him?

*Guardian Angel.* It is the strain  
Of all high spirits towards him. Thou couldst not  
Even if thou wouldst behold God; masked in dust,  
Thine eye on darkness lights; but when flesh-freed,  
And the dust shaken off the shining essence,  
God shall glow through thee as through living glass,  
And every thought and atom of thy being  
Shall guest his glory; be o'erbright with God.  
Hadst thou not been by faith immortal made  
For the instant, lo! thine eye had been thy death.  
Come, I will show thee heaven and angels, all.  
Lo! the Recording Angel!

*Festus.* Him I see  
High seated, and the pen within his hand,  
Plumed like a storm-portending cloudlet curved  
Half over heaven, and swift in use divine,  
As is a warrior's spear?

*Guardian Angel.* The book wherein,

By far to come collation of fixed spheres  
 Are written the records of the universe,  
 Passed deeds of wandering worlds contrast with thoughts  
 Of fixed to come, 'neath his previsive eye  
 Illumining that it reads, behold !

*Recording Angel.* And here,  
 Thine orb's end, mortal, mark, now nigh.

*Festus.* Ah me !

*Guardian Angel.* Turn then the leaf.

*Recording Angel.* Yet is't not every world  
 Laid open to its axis thus, by stroke  
 Of death, hath fate like glorious.

*Festus.* It is our joy.

*Guardian Angel.* See there, where mighty Michael,  
 dight not now  
 In panoply sun-blinding, nor on war  
 Exterminant bent, though looking towards a field  
 Of thunderous battle to be fought yet, big  
 With creatural fates,—pacific, joys to scan,  
 At God's behest, the Book of Life, where beam  
 The names, in starry brilliants, of God's sons,  
 The spirit-names which angels learn by heart,  
 Foregiven.

*Guardian Angel.* Wilt see thine own ?

*Festus.* My name ? Enough

It is writ, then, in the scroll of life.

*Recording Angel.* It is writ.

*Festus.* Henceforth to me that constellated word  
 Is more and clearer than all stars.

*Recording Angel.* To heaven  
 It is bright or dim as actions cause.

*Guardian Angel.* Raise still  
 Thine eyes : thy gleaming throne, hewn from that mount  
 Of light, which ere created light, or night  
 Never create, was ; heaven's eternal base,  
 Whereon God's throne is 'stablished. Sit on it.

*Festus.* Nay, nothing more than sight will I forestall.

*Recording Angel.* Good. I have seen a brighter seat  
 than thine

Like a dejected star, hurled o'er the brink  
 Of being, to nothingness unconceived, undreamed.

*Guardian Angel.* Turn now, and view yon streams  
 where spirits sport

Quaffing immortal life, the river of God,  
 Whence draw the heavenlies peace, preparing aye  
 For higher and intenser being ; and here,  
 The upper fountains of the heavens behold,  
 Waters of life regenerative, like aged  
 With the emanations of eternity.  
 There Raphael, healing angel, once of eyes

Terrestrial, purger, bidden of God, presides ;  
 Laving wherewith, the immortals purify  
 Their sight to penetrate the essential light  
 In all things hidden, which,—visible but by eyes  
 Made clear æthereally, like the stone  
 Of fabulous function, all-conversive seed  
 O' the sun, conceived of fire, transmutes all touched,  
 All souls so ones with heaven's great soul. Such bliss  
 And power, reserved for man ; such faculties.  
 Yet but the surface-shadow canst thou see ;  
 The substance is to be. There Gabriel, chief  
 Of messengers evangelist to worlds  
 Desperate of good, or self-condemned, declares  
 God's warnings ; or, predictive, charged with store  
 Of tidings gracious, towards the spirits around  
 Expounds his promises. Behold yon group  
 Of spirits blessed. In their divinest eyes  
 The spirit now speaks ; and shows that in their own  
 All doubt, all want, have ceased, as death.

*Festus.*

But see !

Hither they come rejoicing, marvelling. Mark  
 How all with kindest wonder look on me.  
 Mayhap to their pure sense I tell of earth.  
 Some seem as if they knew me. I know none.  
 But how claim kinship with the glorified,  
 Unless with them like glorified ? Yet, yes !  
 It is, it must be ; that angelic spirit !  
 My heart outruns me ; mother ! see thy son.

*Angel.* Child ! how art thou here ?

*Festus.*

God hath let me come.

*Angel.* Art thou not come unbidden, and unprepared ?

*Festus.* Forgive me, if it be so. I am come.

And I have ever said there are two who will  
 Forgive me aught I do, my God, and thou.

*Angel.* I do. May he !

*Festus.*

Dear mother, thou art blessed !

And I am blessèd, in knowing this of thee.

*Angel.* Son of my hopes on earth, and prayers in  
 heaven,

The love of God, oh ! it is infinite,  
 Even as our imperfection ! Promise, child !  
 To love him for this privilege, more than e'er,  
 And for his boundless kindness shown towards me.  
 Now my son hear me, for heaven's hours are not  
 As earth's ; all's all but lost not given to God.  
 Oft have I seen with joy thy thoughts of heaven  
 And holy hopes, which track the soul with light,  
 Rise from dead doubts within thy troubled breast,  
 As souls of drowned bodies from the sea,  
 Upwards to God ; and marked them so received

That oh ! my soul hath overflowed with rapture,  
 As now thine eye with tears. But oh, my son,  
 Belovèd, fear thou ever for thy soul ;  
 It yet hath to be saved. Nought perfect stands  
 But that which is in heaven. God is all kind ;  
 And long time hath he made thee think of him.  
 Think on him, yet in time. Ere I left earth,  
 With the last breath which air would spare for me,  
 The last look life would bless me with, I prayed,  
 And half the prayer I brought myself to God,  
 Thou mightst be wise and happy ; and now behold  
 Thou art unhappy, and unwise.

*Festus.*

Beloved

And blessed one, I rejoice that thou art clear,  
 And all who have cared for me of my misdeeds.  
 Thy spirit was on those who nurtured me.  
 All word and practice that could be of good  
 Was to me given, so that my sin is splendid.  
 Yes if I have sinned, I have sublimely sinned.  
 And I am glad I suffer for my faults.  
 I would not, if I might, be bad and happy.

*Angel.* God laughs at evil by man made, and allows it  
 In common with all free life, scope to act ;  
 The vaunt of mountainous evil and the power  
 To challenge heaven as from a molehill, child.

*Festus.* Few better hearts than mine hath God e'er made,  
 However much it fail in the wise ways  
 Of the world, as living in the dull dark streets  
 Of forms and follies wherein men brick themselves.

*Angel.* The goodness of the heart is shown in deeds  
 Of peacefulness and kindness. Hand and heart  
 Are one thing with the good, as thou shouldst be.  
 Corruption's splendour hath no vital power.  
 Content in sin shows apathy, not peace.  
 Do my words trouble thee ? Then treasure them.  
 Pain overgot gives peace, as martyr's death  
 Earns heaven. All things that speak of heaven, speak peace.  
 Peace hath more might than war. High brows are calm.  
 The host of stars is still. Their silence weighs  
 More mightily with the mind—than though they spake  
 Thousand-tongued, musically ; and truths, like suns  
 Stir not ; though systems round them come and go.  
 Mind's step is still as death's, and all great things,  
 Which cannot be controlled, whose end is good.  
 This peace, God's peace, seek thou, and learn to love.  
 Behold yon throne : there love, faith, hope are one ;  
 There judgment, righteousness and mercy work  
 One same result, salvation. This of God  
 His vengeance means in heaven ; for how should he  
 All good, of evil avenge himself, unless

By substituted good ? How wrath keep aye,  
 Save by ill slain to his glory, as on earth  
 Destruction restoration means to the pure ?  
 Humanity is perfected in heaven.

*Festus.* Myself I did not make, nor plan my soul.  
 I am no angel nursed in the lap of light ;  
 Nor fed on milk immortal of the stars ;  
 Nor golden fruit grown in the summery suns.  
 How am I answerable for this my soul ?  
 My master, free with me, as fixed with fate ;  
 As a star which moves a certain course in mode  
 Certain, its liberties are laws ; its laws,  
 Tyrannic, under God. All that we do,  
 Or bear, is settled from eternity  
 Endless, beginningless. To act is ours ;  
 Quite sure, not less, all done, or good or ill,  
 Is for God's glory always, and is ordered.

*Angel.* If soul were but an organ, and no power  
 Of good or evil had haply within itself,  
 More than the eye hath power of light or dark,  
 God fitting it for good, and evil being  
 Good in another way we are not skilled in,—  
 The good we do of his own good will, the ill  
 Of his own letting, man were simply slave  
 Choiceless, of dignity void, nor grandly impowered  
 To make law, as to obey ; a lustrous failure ;  
 A perfect imperfection ; even as nature,  
 All light in life, shines marshlike, too, in death,  
 With vagrant fires that haunt even rottenness.  
 But worse with souls that wilfully unjust  
 We see, reject their privileged walk with God ;  
 Their source of true vitality, lost ; and given  
 So to degenerate life that all their powers,  
 And splendid faculties, but decaying seem  
 In sin, and flying off by elements ;  
 Like wandering worlds which scare the extremes of space  
 With fiery visitation, or in black  
 Abyss of preordained destruction, slow  
 Perish, self dissipative ; a continent, now  
 Sloughing, a climate. Oh to such, woe worth !  
 What shall be done to them ?

*Festus.* Probational life  
 Doubtless endures as long as justice claims.  
 All may not live again, but all which do  
 Must change perpetually even in heaven ;  
 And not by death to death, but life to life.

*Angel.* No ; step by step, and throne by throne, we rise  
 Continually towards the Infinite ;  
 And ever nearer, never near to God.

*Festus.* Yet merit or demerit none I see,

In nature, human or material none ;  
 In passions nor affections, good or bad.  
 We only know that God's best purposes  
 Are oftenest brought about by dreadest sins.  
 Is thunder evil ? or is dew divine ?  
 Does virtue lie in sunshine, sin in storm ?  
 Is not each natural, each needful, best ?  
 How know we what is evil from what good ?  
 Wrath and revenge God claimeth as his own.  
 And yet men speculate upon right and wrong,  
 And good and ill, as each annihilative  
 Of each, like day and night ; forgetting both  
 One cause, the same original have, God's will ;  
 Each, ultimately, him. That God enjoins,  
 That God permits, are the twin wheels whereon  
 The world runs glibly enough, and will, to the end.  
 All right is right divine. A worm hath rights  
 Kings leagued cannot despoil him of, nor sin.  
 Yet wrongs are things necessitate like wants ;  
 And oft are well allowed of to best ends.  
 A double error sometimes sets us right.

*Angel.* But if in man no absolute rule inhere  
 Of right and wrong, his God-given conscience then  
 Were of all things most base, which, vacillant, lives  
 Now justifying, again condemning sin,  
 Accomplice, traitor, judge and headsman, all.  
 But conscience knows its business and performs ;  
 And though long cowed and crushed, at last due seat  
 Regains, and claims to sit God's assessor.  
 Nor this sole, but through penitence due for sin  
 Her purifying intent expresses, till  
 Transfigured, glorified, she soars to heaven.

*Festus.* Or falls, for ages lost ; mayhap for ever.

*Angel.* Nothing is lost in nature, least of all  
 The immortal spirit to deity, proof and pledge  
 Triumphant, of his kindest attributes ;  
 His will to uplift, advance, expand, perfect  
 Each individual soul, and all unite  
 In one supreme perfection, of himself  
 The essential image ; every state and sphere  
 Of universal nature, a holy stage  
 Of purified amendment for the next  
 Creative birth, and graduated ascent,  
 Toward this spiritual, summing, centering, all  
 The excellences of being. Nay, no soul,  
 Though plunged within sin's blackest, lowest, depth,  
 Lost to the world, to angels, to itself,  
 Is lost to God ; but there it works his will,  
 And burns conformably with justice. Sin  
 Convinced, bears penitence ; and from ignorant vice

Converted, springs wise virtue ; from mean greed  
 Active beneficence never satiate, save  
 With welfare of some rational soul, secured,  
 Or compassed, charitably : all virtues, means  
 To some diviner ends, attainable still  
 By man, majestic in progression. Grace,  
 Knowledge and love, the sense of harmony,  
 And beauty of form, used rightly by the spirit  
 Studious of high ends, are purifying powers.  
 So, all things that to order and perfectness  
 Of nature tend, the accomplishments of being,  
 And blessings of life social, crowned in peace.  
 For as nature's elements all are harmonized,  
 And the mind's powers, with thought's perfective rules ;  
 So our emotions trained symmetric, range  
 Approvedly, with the law of highest good ;  
 In such wise operative, that weakest things  
 Are yet to be made examples of his might,  
 The most defective of his perfect grace,  
 Whene'er he thinketh well.

*Festus.* Oh everything  
 To me seems good, and lovely, and immortal.  
 The whole is beautiful ; nor can I see  
 Aught wrong in man nor nature, aught not meant,  
 As from his hands it comes, who fashions all ;  
 Holy as his formative word, the world itself  
 His mightier revelation ; to whose sense,  
 All writ must be attuned, all miracles made  
 Like broadly just. He breathes himself upon us,  
 Before our birth, as o'er the formless void  
 He moved at first, and we with his spirit are all  
 Livingly inspired. All things are God or of God.  
 For the whole is in God's mind, what is a thought  
 In ours. All that is good belongs to God ;  
 And good and God are all things ; or shall be.

*Angel.* God, in his own parental nature, knows  
 All creatures and their possible powers ; for he  
 By universal essence is ; and through  
 His attributes, by limited mind alone  
 Distinguished from his substance, to all made  
 Imparts his virtues, and with reason impowers  
 The creatures he, their author, throughlier knows  
 Than they themselves ; their course, their every lapse,  
 Exorbitant from the right, and glad return  
 From firmamental exile, back to him :  
 Who mercifully forgiving sin, foreseen  
 By precreative eye, yet not approves  
 Ill, fruit of imperfection, save as test  
 Of vital faith and patience in pure hearts.  
 Thus, all created good, or to good ends,

Or sanctified, conduce. Man's highest bliss,  
 In union with his source and crowning end,  
 In serving man and loving God ; his root,  
 And final flower, is when to vast surview  
 Raised, of God's kingdom, the soul-straitening bounds  
 Of race, creed, temperament o'ertopped, the spirit  
 All covetings, vain distinctions, schemes, desires,  
 To God surrendering, abnegates ; to him  
 Being of beings, who all things vivifies ;  
 Who his own goodness in his creatures seeks ;  
 His own intense perfection ; his divine  
 Beauty and purity, as the sun in dew  
 His reflex glory. So, too, the liberate soul,  
 Rapt in the ecstatic gaze of joy he grants,  
 And into commune raised with its cause, partakes  
 Freedom divine, divine necessity ; nay,  
 Anticipating eternity, fore-reads  
 With angels, on God's face, the thoughts of peace,  
 And miracles of benevolence he conceives  
 To enrich and bless all life with. But thou, yet,  
 There lacks in souls like thine unsaved, unraised,  
 The light within, of perfectness, as in heaven.  
 How oft the soul, even strong, if tempted falls !  
 As some rock-towering lighthouse which long years  
 Rolls its ubiquitous eye, cyclopic, vast,  
 Sea-searching ; but to Time's slow sap and siege  
 At last consentful, leaves a gap, by groans  
 Greeted from ruinous barques ; and, 'neath the sea  
 Lurking, exasperates every peril that once  
 It luminously forbade ; so, stable and stern,  
 The virtuous soul I have seen, long time, command  
 The future, marked and thanked by thousands saved  
 Gloriously ; but fallen, lie hopeless now as thine  
 O'ersurged, alas by life's allurements. God,  
 God only, it is, can raise it and rebuild.

*Guardian Angel.* And his, thy son's, he will yet raise.

Since with me,  
 I have shown him infinite wonders. We have oped  
 And scanned fate's golden scroll wherein are writ  
 In God's own hand all things to be ; have seen  
 The records of his being, passed, and to come ;  
 His long temptation, sin and suffering.

*Festus.* And hear it, O beloved and blessed, mine own  
 Salvation.

*Angel.* God, how great is he, in being,  
 Infinite infinitely, in power, and grace.  
 But oh ! transcendent truth, when thus to one  
 Poor spirit, he gives his hand in love, he seems  
 To impart his own unboundedness of bliss.  
 Scarce worth destroying, one thinks, less saving ; each  
 Loves he as all his equals were.

*Festus.* I know  
 All I must henceforth go through, the doubts, woes,  
 Passions of life; which knowing, hinders not,  
 Purificative trials, by whose stern aid  
 The spirit achieves perfection; sloughing off,  
 Snakewise, constraint of narrower being; the world's  
 Entanglements, the snares of youth. I bear  
 Obeyingly; nor repine as erst when I  
 Looked back, and saw how life had balked, foiled, fooled me.  
 Fresh as a spouting spring upon the hills,  
 My heart leapt out to lifewards; little it thought  
 Of all the vile cares that would rill into it;  
 The mean low places it must coast; the falls,  
 The drains, the crossings, and the millwork after.  
 God hath endowed me with a soul scorns life;  
 An element over and above the world's.  
 But the price one pays for pride is mountain high.  
 There is a curse beyond death's rack; a woe  
 God hath put forth his strength in; a pain past  
 All our mad wretchedness when some sacred secret  
 Hath flown from out the encaging heart, care-closed,  
 Vainly; the curse of a high spirit famishing,  
 Because all earth but sickens it.

*Angel.* Nay, confirm  
 Thy spirit with godlier, say, with manlier thoughts.  
 Contrast not earth-life with celestial; both  
 Variants of one existence deem; the same  
 This, but immutable, save to happier ends.  
 Here, as the general air, inspired of all,  
 All speak the mind of God whose world-like thoughts  
 Heaven's multitudinous being suffuse, as beams,—  
 To one who curious treads the wavy panes  
 Of ocean's floor gold framed, through myriad squares  
 Tempered, the sun, quickening the expanse with light.  
 Here, all in all, we live, the weakliest soul  
 His solar spirit partaking, as need bids;  
 He not alone of things the conscious force,  
 But conscience of all spirits, who to heaven's  
 Perfective science, man's nature so adapts,  
 By gradual growth of virtue, to attain  
 Divinity, that he may the whole fulfil.  
 These excellences of godhood are the modes  
 Whereby to us create, he makes himself  
 Known, truth's source, end and centre, which supply  
 With perfect sustenance each benevolent vow;  
 Each virtuous aim earth owns; as justly fixed  
 Towards the perpetual betterment of things,  
 And reascension sourcewards of all souls;  
 Heaven's only aim extraneous to itself;  
 Wherewith earth's wisest, holiest spirits, truth-freed,

Collaborate, that all reach,—none lost,—divine  
 Perfection, realized only here, where law  
 Nature and liberty trined, are blessed. Doubt not  
 If, as thou sayest, thy future life thou knowest,  
 And but its rudiments surely, limned, perchance,  
 By eye imaginative, as yet in block  
 Unhewn, the pillars of Time's temple :—still,  
 In all things seek, and that sole, perfectness  
 In nature, virtue, reason, faith ; which, used  
 Rightly, to God unite the spirit outrayed  
 From him ; and with essential Deity tinged.  
 For while by various faults and flaws, each soul  
 Falls,—not irrevocably,—God's saving love  
 By discipline drawn, by penitence, by pure life,  
 The spirit self strained from guile, relamps, helps on  
 Its upward way, steep, devious, painful, dark,  
 With cheering words ; and, not contaminate  
 By voluntary offence, restores, redeems,  
 Redeifies. Here, the hopes of earth's best hearts,  
 The master aims of ages, for man's good,  
 All nature's properties perfected, man's mind,  
 In God, the rational unity of the whole,  
 Embraces, and in meditating grows blessed.

*Festus.* How radiant show you blessed souls !

*Angel.*

Know, child,

Each faithful thought of God, each saintly hope,  
 Clear aspiration for earth's weal : pure aim :  
 Beneficent deed : each reverent service shown  
 To man's majestic nature, as to him,  
 The spirit of pure humanity deified,  
 Each generous thought that warms the social breast  
 Here beams a ray of life divine, the frame  
 Fills with e'er heightening beauty, and the whole  
 Being perradiates with celestial light,  
 Transfigurative ; which known, all choice of good  
 The soul is capable of, will heaven foretell  
 In us : and God's embrace, soul-hallowing, show,  
 Token of the spirit's birth in man, whose mind  
 Progressive, suffering, but perfectible, crowned,  
 Divinized, in itself all things made good,  
 Thus harmonizes with other, and with God.

*Festus* Behold the ebb of the life-tide of the world !

*Angel.* It grieves not me. We sooner meet. Go, child !  
 Fulfil thy fate. Be—do—bear, and thank God.  
 Be good, do good ; bear pains heaven sent, resigned  
 To God's corrective love : and in the light,  
 Soul-ripening, of his law, prepared for this.  
 To me it seems as I had lived all ages  
 Since leaving earth : and thou art yet scarce man  
 Matured ; than that more thou wilt never be.

*Festus.* It was not, mother, that I knew thy face ;  
 The luminous eclipse that is on it now,  
 Though it was fair on earth, would have made it strange  
 Even to one who knew as well as he loved thee.  
 And if these time-tired eyes ever imaged thine  
 It was but for a moment, and the sight  
 Passed ; and my life was broken like a line  
 At the first word ;—but my heart cried out in me.

*Angel.* Thee knew I well. And now, to earth again ;  
 Go, son ; and say to all who once were mine,  
 I love them, and expect them.

*Festus.* Blessèd one !

I go.

*Angel.* I charge thee, Genius, bear him safely.

*Genius.* Through light and night and all the powers of  
 air

I have a passport.

*Angel.* God be with thee, child.

*Festus.* Where, Angel, is the spirit induced me here ?

*Genius.* That spirit is no more here. Behold him gone  
 Like a spent thunder-cloud which, rolled away,  
 Bears in its shapes chaotic, visible proof  
 Of the distracting fires that rent its breast,  
 Of force self dissipative. Not long can he  
 Heaven's light—foretaste permitted thee—abide :  
 Thus eminently, wherein all these exult  
 From saint to seraph, hierarchies of bliss  
 For known to all ye angels is the good  
 God hath eternally decreed to man ;  
 The secrets of perfection, yours ; but heaven's  
 High whispers and intense, the soul of ill  
 Knows not, nor can know ; in the source of light  
 Sightless ; and, means for ends misplacing ever,  
 Of his own acts incomprehensive, he  
 Glutting life's passionatest desires at full,  
 And instigating soul's vainest aims, misdeems  
 To cause thee, spirit of earth !—God lost,—thyself  
 Forfeit to him ; albeit God all o'errules,  
 To his own great ends, in manner none forecasts.  
 But this know ; and, as spherelet nigh the sun,  
 Revels in lightful secresy, my soul  
 With heavenly insight penetrate, perceives,  
 Down broadening vistas of futurity, how  
 Him shall God's Son, divine humanity,  
 Revisiting misreported hell, endure  
 To meet, and all his hosts with hope inspire  
 To earn, repentant, pride subject, heaven's peace,  
 Pardon and restoration.

*Saints.* Joyed, we hear.

*Genius.* For lo ! it is written in the book of God,

Where spirits may learn aforetime what is fate,  
 In endless prescience of world-winning love,  
 That as by angel man through woman fell,  
 Through her shall this first-fallen again too rise ;  
 All life in ultimate perfection linked  
 By him who chooseth oft-times meanest means  
 To compass world vast purposes, whereby  
 God vindicates himself. Nay, thine own sphere,  
 The first-fruits of the great destruction, earth,  
 Born of the mother-night of ages, once,  
 Into a sad and struggling life, at last  
 Shall be most blessed, hailed among the worlds.

*Angel.* All time, all place is consecrate to God.  
 Man may do despite, but the ill redounds  
 Only to him. The world is holy still,  
 God's fane is unprofaned. Some graceless wretch  
 Blasphemes a holy sage ; what harm ? The throat  
 Filled with scurrility, only, is defiled ;  
 Not seer, nor his pure word. So too, all means  
 Have majesty, if used of God ; all ends  
 By him who made, ordained, are sanctified.

*Genius.* Come.

*Festus.* I feel happier, better, nobler now.

*Genius.* See, where now, like a journeying beam of light  
 From the sun's arched crown she moves, each orblet passed  
 Enveloping in her shadow aureolewise ;  
 Mark, too where midst those radiant rounds, well-nigh  
 With spirits elect replete, few void ;—in sooth  
 One only, primary, and its satellite seats,  
 They welcome her return. How sayest thou, soul ?  
 What seest mid that celestial session ?

*Festus.* I  
 See where she smiling sits, who, latewhile, here  
 Me wiseliest counselled : and now points me out  
 With finger, used God's gracious deeds to trace,  
 To those who near her sit ; that twain serene ;  
 Brow-mitred with ærial gold unwrought ;  
 Who be they ?

*Genius.* That, mankind's great mother ; this  
 His who mankind with loftiest creed enriched  
 Of divine sonship, in God's spirit renewed,  
 By virtue ; by repentance justified ; such  
 The soul's sole way from earth to God the truth.  
 And nigh these, she, mother of soul God-chosen,  
 Life's fine, and last of men ; for thou art he.

*Festus.* Am I ? It is enough. I have seen God.

*Genius.* God, and his great idea, the universe,  
 Via one and infinite thought aye being evolved,  
 Over us, and about us. Be the one,  
 King of beings, as thou hast known, in whom

The spirits finite of all essential spheres,  
 Progressive and self-purificative, work out  
 Their everbettering end, God only God,  
 Worshipped ; be the other reverently proved.

*Festus.* Surely there's rest in heaven.

*Guardian Angel.*

As thou, ere now

Hast seen, the spirits of men, the wise, brave, just,  
 Daring and charitable, in those strange spheres  
 The angel of thy satellite crescent showed,  
 Their guerdon of self-completive perfectness  
 Taken at God's hand, through dateless terms of time,  
 Triumphs of passed and future, not without  
 Toil spiritual achieved and earnest deed ;  
 So here behold how holy is well-won rest ;  
 And how the soul finite, by endless life  
 Enriched, God crowns, betimes, with ease intense,  
 And renovative repose. The heart of heaven  
 This, which in silent movement like the soul's  
 In spiritual commune with God e'er lives.

*God.* Hear heaven ; and earth, hear ! Not in vain  
 shall all

My prophets, sons of God, through time, have preached  
 Of justice and heaven's peace with man to come.  
 Let therefore peace, and charity on earth  
 Start forth, as from the tender herb the dew,  
 'Mong all mankind one-minded. Let pure schemes,  
 Just and benevolent souls of ages gone,  
 Have nursed, mature ; let hopes sincere of all  
 World-patriots, earth's best spirits for nature's weal,  
 Fulfil themselves ; all godly plans bear fruit  
 Of laudable profit ; freedom and the use  
 Temperate of all heaven's blessings, with just sense  
 Of mutual rights, and service due 'mong all,  
 Brethren ; heart-purity ; holy life prevail  
 Most presently earth over.

*Festus.*

Peace, thou saidst,

Lord ?

*God.* Peace, I say. Be war henceforth reserved  
 To spiritual ends, and strife of virtuous soul  
 'Gainst soul ill-willed, 'gainst evil ; which not, all life  
 Create were aimless ; such war, war divine,  
 Emancipative of spirit, as in accord  
 With fate long uttered, shall the close of things  
 Terrestrial, mark, decisive, to the amaze  
 Of all, participant in that final field  
 Of evil and good. Be thou right strong to bear  
 Therein thy part.

*Festus.*

Thine, Lord ! the cause, the praise.

*God.* This contest we remit to man's last race  
 And generation, that, by choice of good,

Rejected sin, soul purity, preferred  
 As dear to God whose breath is holiness,  
 Heaven gives and makes cause common with all souls,  
 For the good, militant. For the time enough.  
 Guard-angel, let this soul thy charge to earth  
 Returned, fate's first-fruits cull.

*Guardian Angel.* I then may him  
 Accompany as of old ?

*God.* Thou hadst need.

*Guardian Angel.* O joy !

*God.* Angel, thou knowest both mine intent towards  
 man

And him who types his race, the crownèd end ;  
 Whom failing, thou mayst strengthen to all good ;  
 Whom sin-bound check ; whom sinning, see thou show,  
 With the spirit who tempts so prompt to avile him, hell ;  
 And so with pains premonitory of proof,  
 His soul chastise, that he the fines may feel  
 Of obstinate fault and purposeful offence ;  
 Yet thence, revisiting earth, the verity tell  
 Long lost to man, of justly apportioned doom  
 In realms whence, self-recuperative, the soul  
 May diffidently again seek to behold  
 My face ; and rightliest balanced equity  
 Prove by strict mercy administered, that the heart  
 Of the broad world may gladden in its God.

*Angels.* So from all ill, Lord ! aye thou bringest good.

*God.* All things are overruled to work mine own  
 Self-satisfactive ends ; Being's boundless good,  
 And everlasting bliss made one with mine.  
 For all souls shall be judged, condemned not all ;  
 None, without end. These, by me chosen to prove  
 To creature mind my sovereign freedom ; those,  
 By virtue's law adjudged and natural light  
 Of conscious right and wrong, the just, so taught  
 Of heaven's eternal equity, proclaim  
 In God and man one common righteousness,  
 One sole ; man justified to God, by sense  
 Of love's, truth's, piety's, laws innate, obeyed ;  
 Or, violate, self-condemned ; and God,—free choice  
 By will, who gave,—like justified to man.

*Festus.* O angel, let me welcome thee.

*Guardian Angel.* Nay, name me.

For by thy lips invoked at morn and eve,  
 My name I love.

*Festus.* Return we now ?

*God.* Return !

The day he choosing world-wide power shall think  
 Men most to serve by ruling and by choice  
 Of peace infrangible, so ensured as there

Shall patently appear, the day of days,  
Earth's angel, angel-guard ! will prove to ye both.

*Festus.* How vast it seems, this deep abyss of worlds  
Below our feet !

*Guardian Angel.* Stars stranger, nobler still  
Than those by thee late visited, we may find.  
Wilt sojourn for a time among these worlds,  
And test their natures ?

*Festus.* Gladly.

*Guardian Angel.* Seek we, then,  
All rareness and variety these bright globes  
Can offer, ere we reach thine orb. Descend.  
Now is the age of worlds : another comes.

*God.* Know all ye angels, I have so made man  
That his original excellence shall defeat  
All he hath ill ; his inborn goodness, sin  
So outweigh finally, his soul shall live  
By royal right of virtue in itself,  
Immortal, and here reign in heaven with us.  
Nor be ye astound, that Evil, by me permit,  
By me, unknown to himself, commissioned life  
More even than one, imperishable, to loose  
From fleshly ; and who, so acting, deems himself  
But by his own vain ends inspired, should feel  
False impulse to triumph ;—all souls, be sure,  
Have their appointed season, and just reward.

*Angels.* Even as in one so may it be in all !  
Be it ever as thou, Lord, sayst. Thy word is fate.  
O haste, ye times when universal man,  
All minor creeds abandoned in one faith,  
Thee sole shall worship integrally ; the eterne,  
The personal infinite, the All-One ; who makes,  
Sustains, comprises all things and redeems.

*Archangels.* All are but particles of One divine,  
And never can in holy gladness shine,  
Till builded all into one common shrine  
Which God shall make his temple. As the woe  
Each human heart on earth doth undergo,  
Shall be the calm immeasurable flow  
Of joy, united man in heaven shall know.

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## XXI.

Time's lapse, who notes mid flights like this? Once more  
 In merry medley mixed, youth's liberal mirth,  
 Disport we; now, the natural luxuries taste  
 Of love, trust, amity, un-Circæan cups  
 Which change to loftier life, by virtuous charms,  
 The spirit, of joy enchanted; still immasked  
 Worldwards, in frivolous pleasures. These, one hour,  
 Our world-seer joins, soul solemnized, to renounce:  
 And, as of old, when in some sainted shrine,  
 By secular license, antic play perturbed,  
 Time and again, the dim-roofed vastnesses,  
 And dominant sanctities of the place, but passed  
 Harmless and soon; the hallowed solitude  
 Leaving, when gone, more grave; so here. Meanwhile,  
 Deserted long, it may be, the only love  
 Life sanctifying,—let wit adorn, or grace  
 Charm as they may,—too sensitive shows, to abide  
 Constant estrangement, and aye failing faith.

*Summer-house and Pleasure-grounds. Groves, walks,  
 fountains.*

● MARIAN, HELEN, EDWARD, CHARLES, SOPHIA, and OTHERS.

*Edward.* Again we meet in this fair scene;  
 Ah! might we be but ever young!

*Harry.* Helen! We pray thee be again our queen.

*Helen.* I prithee hold thy tongue:  
 A royal revolution 'twere, indeed,  
 That I should twice reign, and myself succeed.

*Charles.* No nay, no nay! it must be so:  
 Permit me.

*Helen.* Well, there needs no show  
 Of more reluctance than I feel;  
 Both kings and queens must court the commonweal.

*Harry.* A bumper at meeting, a bumper at parting!  
 As many you like be between;  
 But we will have a right ruddy brimmer at starting;  
 A health to our beautiful queen!  
 Long, long may she reign in our hearts and right arms,  
 And her all but omnipotence last!  
 She shall fear nothing rougher than love's light alarms;  
 There is nought in the coming can darken her charms;  
 There is nought can eclipse in the past.  
 A brimmer at sitting, a brimmer at starting,  
 As many you like be between;  
 But we will have a right ruddy bumper at parting;  
 A health to our beautiful queen!

Oh ! while beauty shall live in the form of the fair,  
 And love in the heart of the brave,  
 The queen of our souls, she shall never despair, [dare,  
 For our hearts we would drain, and our deaths we would  
 To avenge whom we love, or to save.

*Helen.* Born to exert the powers of my state,  
 Charles, I have named thee poet-laureate.

*Harry.* Kiss hands upon appointment.

*Charles.* Sovereign fair !  
 Behold thy grateful servant.

*Helen.* Sit thou there,  
 In all but full equality with me ;  
 Love rules the heart, and the mind poesie :  
 In youth at least, and when in hours like this,  
 The rule is pleasure, the exception bliss.

*Laurence.* But where is Festus ?

*Helen.* 'Tis to him we owe  
 The repetition of this scene of joy.

He bids me say he loves ye all ye know,  
 But deems his presence less attraction than annoy.

Whatever ye can name, and I command,  
 Is by his bidding welcome thus to all ;  
 But pardon craves ; high quests he hath in hand,  
 Which wait not on his own nor pleasure's call.

And though to me his presence be a power,  
 His every word with love's bright magic rife,  
 Yet he—nor him from that height would I lower—

Lives in the upper hemisphere of life ;  
 Where angel thoughts and spiritual orbs  
 Roll in the majesty of mind profound ;  
 Where Truth's bright disk, all doubt spots dark absorbs,  
 And inspiration's lightning beams abound.

Whether he e'er return to scenes like this,  
 I know not—much I question—but can trace

The tone, methinks, of that sad soul of his  
 Roll ever deepening down an endless bass,  
 Like an abyss of thunder. But, away !

These tears mine eyes have haunted all the day ;  
 Now they are vanished. Let us change, I pray,  
 The matter of our converse.

*Sophia.* Ay, be gay !

*Helen.* Come, we will consecrate the passing hour,  
 With songs of love, and lays of beauty's power ;  
 For when the tale of Time hath told  
 A thousand thousand years,  
 His purple pinions starred with gold,  
 Wherewith he doth the world enfold,  
 Will still be stained with dust, and tears ;  
 And still life's sole brief Paradise, in sooth,  
 Be love and beauty in the hour of youth.

A song, a dance, one cup to beauty's name ;  
 Music, a jest, or pleasant tale in rhyme ;  
 Sufficient these, with mirth and gentle game,  
 Alternate with repose, to fill our time.  
 And first, a dance ! for earth and heaven  
 Are both to choral influence given.  
 All things their nature that fulfil,  
 In harmlessness and joy, his will  
 Worship and do ; though dumb and still ;  
 For noteless, countless are the ways  
 Of nature practising his praise ;  
 And dancing hath a sacred birth  
 Like all the happiest customs of the earth.

*Charles.* The sun in the centre turns solemnly round,  
 And the pale god of shades, the conductor of souls,  
 Seems to warm as he circles the glory profound,  
 Where the goddess of beauty all beamingly rolls ;  
 While earth, with her sister, floats brilliantly by,  
 Her heart towards the sun, and her love in her eye.  
 Then Mars, like a warrior gloomy and red,  
 Impetuous wheels, ever glancing at one ;  
 While nine sister goddesses mazily tread,  
 In the midst of a nonade each heavenly head,  
 The bright fields of air which encircle the sun ;  
 And Jove the majestic, serene in his might,  
 Sweeps cloudy and thunderous aye to the light.  
 Then Saturn, old grey-bearded emblem of time,  
 Comes slowly and chilly to join with the rest ;  
 And Ouranus next with young Eros sublime,  
 Move slowly as though they partook with the blest ;  
 And each, his bright bevy of servitors round,  
 Complete the vast figure with harmony crowned.

*Helen.* This, Sir, is your inaugural ode ?

*Charles.* If you, fair lady, think it so.  
 Your word imposes the sole code  
 Of law, or justice, we may know.

*Helen.* Then my authority is absolute.

*Edward.* As truth's my liege.

*Helen.* We'll soon see if it suit.  
 So like the stars which circle through the skies,  
 As Charles hath sung,  
 Let us too dance with choral harmonies  
 Ourselves among.

*Marian, apart.* Again that name hath knelled upon  
 mine ear,  
 Though I have never voiced it. 'Tis to me  
 Too deeply, yea unutterably dear.  
 How warmly too she loves him ! Let it be.  
 Who most enjoy the light may best endure,  
 When come, the darkness ; as it now is here.  
 Whatever his, may my troth-plight keep sure !

I have turned to thee, moon, from the glance  
 That in triumphing coldness was given ;  
 And rejoiced, as I viewed thee all lonely advance,  
 There was something was lonely in heaven.  
 I have turned to thee, moon, as I lay  
 In thy silent and saddening brightness ;  
 And rejoiced, as high heaven went shining away,  
 That the heart had its desolate lightness.  
 I have turned to thee, moon, from my love,  
 And from all that once blessed me, in sadness ;  
 And can marvel no more that, abandoned above,  
 Thou should'st lend thy bright face to make madness.  
 I have turned to thee, moon, from my heart,  
 That in love hath long laboured and sorrowed :  
 And have hoped it might mix, as I watched thee depart,  
 Like thyself, with the morn which had morrowed.

*Laurence.* Can I behold the lady of my love  
 Mourning alone, from pleasure all apart ?  
 Again I seek thee, though it be to hear  
 The sentence of destruction to my heart.  
 Yet if it be so, still one moment stay ;  
 For so it haps whene'er I think of thee,  
 So blent is thought with love's anxiety,  
 My spirit doth invariably pray.  
 Any blessing God can give  
 Never be withheld from thee ;  
 Nor will I desire to live  
 If that prayer be lost to me ;  
 Else I were unworthy thee.  
 If e'er my hand doth aught of good  
 I do it in thy name ;  
 For well I know thy kind heart would,  
 If with me, bid the same.  
 All mirth I check, for well I know  
 It is not meet for me ;  
 No smile shall ever light this brow,  
 Nor ought, away from thee.

*Marian.* I thank thee, Laurence, and believe ;  
 But this is all I can for thee,  
 Save grieve that thou should'st vainly grieve  
 I to another am as thou to me ;  
 In this strange passion which pain sanctifies ;  
 This folly sorrow makes sublime and wise.

*Laurence.* Oh ! there is nothing in this world of ours  
 So sad to see,  
 As the dark worm which dwells wherever flowers  
 Our destiny ;  
 Eating the heart out of youth's budding hours  
 Of glee.  
 Not oft in sunny beds, nor sheltered bowers,

Life's lot is cast ;  
 But chiefly lost in shade, and chilled by showers,  
 Or the rude blast ;  
 Till all its delicate and wholesome powers  
 Are past.

And this then is the end of all the bliss  
 Which love and beauty offered, and my soul  
 Made certain of in natural triumph ; this  
 The heritage of life ; and this, love's goal.

*Marian.* Peace ! there is one I name not, came not here  
 Partly because of me. But think'st thou I  
 Came to indulge a wretched vanity  
 With thee, or pry into another's sphere ?  
 With whom I grieve too ; which is more unblest,  
 Whose love is shunned or sought, let time attest !

*Lucy.* In his thou lovest we see thy heart,  
 Engrossed exists but as a part  
 Of one essential ; and there be  
 Who deem not that too wise in thee ;  
 But as some unwary serpent who her soul's  
 Pride hath paid down for sweet sounds, and unrolls,  
 Or intertwines, her body's shining rings,  
 At his mere will who, touched the silver keys  
 Of ivory flutelet, opes and seals joy's springs  
 Within her ; gently irritates at ease,  
 Or soothes ; but charms her, wheresoe'er he please ;  
 Until, translated for obedient skill,  
 Into his breast she, nestling there, lies still,  
 Pleased, nigh to death, with such dear harmonies ;—  
 So we, more free, thy love confess  
 Hath more of faith than hopefulness.

*Marian.* It may be ; mine it is, no less.

*Helen.* And now, for pastime, some one tell a tale ;  
 Come, an adventure, Charles.

*Charles.* Oh, pray dispense  
 With my devoirs this time. I fain would try  
 If any wit be in the company ;  
 By observation, not experience,  
 Of course I judge : for of my own  
 The world and I are cognizant alone.

*Emma.* Fatigued, no doubt, with over-admiration  
 Of your sweet self.

*Helen.* Well, all then, in rotation.

*Walter.* Now I know a delicious tale  
 Will suit you, Carrie to a T.

*Caroline.* Do tell me then, and I'll believe  
 It more than truth, if need should be.

*Walter.* Well ; Love is the child of bliss and woe ;  
 So, from his parents dear,  
 One eye is blinded with a smile,

One drownèd in a tear.  
 And on one lip there drops a kiss,  
 Like honey from the wild woodbine ;  
 And that's the lip he had from bliss—  
 And that's the lip I will have mine ;  
 But on the other hangs a lie,  
 And that—but that's 'tween you and I.

*Caroline.* How very odd !

*Walter.* Why, it's a fact,  
 And therefore needs no illustration ;  
 But if you think its principle abstract  
 It is easily shown in operation.

*Caroline.* Oh dear ! no, no ! I'll vow it's true,  
 Rather than have it proved by you.

*Lucy.* How aught than truth can e'er be truer,  
 Is news than e'en the newest newer.

*Edward.* Who thinks to sever life's delights  
 From happiest duty, woe invites ;  
 A fact which minstrels of all times  
 Have sanctioned, listen ! in their rhymes :

*Lucy sings.*

As I stood by the lakelet of love, to my view,  
 Mid the moon's fairy glow, shone a soul-charming scene ;  
 The clouds were all silver, the skies were all blue,  
 And the shores were all waving with woodlands of green.  
 In a boat-shell of pearl sailed a maid and a youth,  
 And the song that she sang sounded sweeter than truth ;  
 But the youth sat all silent ; and soon to my sight,  
 They sped through the gathering shadows of night.

While I watched them departing, the waves seemed to sigh,  
 And the faintest of halos encircled the moon ;  
 And though love-light the gale, ever feigning to die,  
 There were signs of a change coming sudden and soon.  
 But the skies were still beaming, the stars were still bright,  
 And the lovers still steering their course of delight,  
 When the sound of the song on mine ear died away,  
 And the seal of sweet silence concluded the day.

When the sun to its woes first awakened the world,  
 What a scene ! the tall forests lay prostrate and bare ;  
 While the love-freighted bark into fragments was hurled,  
 And the youth and the maiden, alas ! they were—where ?  
 'Gainst the tempest that raged they had struggled in vain ;  
 And the lake rolling wroth as the storm-stricken main ;  
 Then the voice that was silent had shrieked round the shore ;  
 And the song that seemed sweeter than truth was no more.

*George.* Well now, hear me, now this is true,  
 Although of love and the lyre too.  
 And since with couples wild as they  
 Who foundered in love's stormy bay,  
 Our sympathy, I dare say, is small ;  
 For all must from the first expect,  
 Those reckless could not but be wrecked,

'Tis a good reason why we may  
Replace them by a pair less dismal ;  
And, as it happened all to me,  
I say but what I could but see.  
I was with the maid I love,  
We were happy and alone ;  
Eve's star just lit the grove,  
And the day had been our own.  
And my lyre lay by my side,  
But no music from it came ;  
For as sure as e'er I tried  
It was harsh or it was tame.  
So I flung it to my feet,  
And I feigned the while I said,  
Thy love I cannot meet ;  
Thou must not love me, maid.  
And more I might have feigned,  
When there came a little boy,  
And his step fell as light  
As a laugh of joy ;  
And he laughed, and said, I'm Love !  
Shall I teach you how to play ?  
And I said, My pretty boy,  
Teach away, teach away !  
So he lifted up the lyre,  
And he fingered its strings,  
Till I thought they did become  
Like spiritual things ;  
And the gold chords shone,  
From the music he clouded,  
Like the links of the lightning,  
When tempests come crowded ;  
And the strain rose and fell,  
'Neath his pink little fingers,  
Like a soul due to earth,  
That in heaven still lingers.  
He ceased : and all over  
He smiled like the strain  
Of the music he made me,  
Nor made me in vain ;  
For I snatched at the lyre,  
While yet it was ringing,  
And I sang, it is love  
Gives the poet his singing.  
Then I turned to my beauty,  
Who kissed her young bard,  
As she said, Love and song  
Shall have thus their reward.  
He laughed till he cried ;  
I pretended to frown :

So my love made him hide  
 In her bosom of down ;  
 Where at last he gasped out,  
 Oh, forgive me, I pray !  
 But I couldn't help laughing ;  
 Boy, I said, get away !  
 Let none, then, who love not  
 Ever offer to sing ;  
 Let none who say false  
 Ever strike the gold string ;  
 He said ! and I saw but the  
 Wave of his wing.

*Lucy.* These stories are delightful ; I declare,  
 I never dreamed that love was to be seen,  
 More than a ghost in these enlightened days.

*Laurence.* Thrice wretched he to whom he comes, I  
 ween.

*Charles.* I had a strange visit once from Love ;  
 But when,—indeed I dread to date it.  
 It is so long since, I half forget ;  
 But if it please you, I'll narrate it.

*Laura.* Oh do ! a poet surely will have something  
 Pretty to say about the poor dear dumb thing.

*Harry.* Dumb ! then you know but little of the tyrant !  
 He'd bellow down a fifth-rate actor by rant.

*Charles.* It is true I have met him once or twice  
 Since the event of which I tell ;  
 He called I find the other day,  
 And left his card ; but T.T.L.  
 So if we meet again, the little god  
 Will get the cut celestial, or a nod  
 At best. But as I fear I am wasting time,  
 For shortness sake I'll tell my tale in rhyme.  
 I nursed with care a favourite fire,  
 In secret and alone ;  
 And oft I blew it with my breath ;  
 And oft 'twas all but gone.  
 And not a soul beside myself  
 Cared for my flame or me ;  
 It made me sad, it made me glad.  
 The very secrecy.

At length my absence made me missed ;  
 They sought me far and near,  
 With muttered scorn, with smile, with sigh ;  
 With silence, and a tear ;  
 And one said, Let the boy alone,  
 His flame will soon expire ;  
 And others said, 'Tis nought to us ;  
 And still I fed my fire.  
 And friends and kindred all condemned,

With stern and fixèd eye,  
 The love of folly which, they said,  
 Possessed me ; spake not I.  
 So one by one they went away,  
 'Twere useless to remain ;  
 Their presence or their absence nought :  
 I fanned my fire again.  
 And Beauty came, but blamed me not ;  
 So sweetly did she ask,  
 Of life and peace, I half forgot  
 To tend my wayward task ;  
 Till, while her eyes were lift above,  
 I spied it, as I turned ;  
 Sprang like a bowstring to the bow,  
 And stirred it till it burned.  
 And pride, and world-ambition came,  
 And tried to tread it out ;  
 But every ember found its nerve,  
 And each with pain did shout ;  
 And Love came, not as he was wont,  
 With kiss and merry brow,  
 And eyes like two forget-me-nots,  
 Dipped in the stream below :—  
 But up he came with torrent tears,  
 And pale and reckless look,  
 And eye as cold as any stone,  
 In petrifying brook ;  
 His shafts, his bow, he dashed on earth,  
 And swore he would expire ;—  
 I took his bow and arrows both,  
 And burned them in my fire.  
 And all that all or aught could do,  
 Was useless to its end ;  
 The flame, though fitful, flourished still,  
 In spite of foe or friend.  
 It warms me now ; I feel it must  
 Respond to my desire ;  
 For I have heaped both heart and soul  
 Upon that deathless fire.

*Lucy.* Poor thing ! I think you served him very ill ;  
 But it accounts for our distressed condition ;  
 For without arms, nor wound can he nor kill :  
 I'm half afraid he'll die of inanition.

*Will.* With poets everything must deathless be ;  
 Now it's the passingness of things that gives  
 Their most exciting charm to me ;  
 Life has less beauty if it ever lives.  
 All loveliest things pass soonest ; clouds and flowers,  
 Rainbows, heart-kindling glances, the sweet smile ;  
 Because brief, we admire, or make them ours ;  
 But we should slight them lived they longer while.

*Charles.* It is sweet to dream we are blessed at last  
with her

Who first made rapture in our bosom stir ;  
Whose heart was fiction's home, while pure romance  
Came purer from her lips ; or was't, perchance,  
Her soul was music's shrine, whence with skilled key,  
Each clear delicious tone the world of sound  
Owns, as akin to airs celestial, she  
At will drew forth, and radiated around ?  
Though fairer, kinder since we may have known,  
That first most innocent vision sits her throne ;  
Still in our sleep plays o'er young passion's part ;  
As pleasure's ghost still haunts the ruined heart ;  
Where lie the buried loves of younger years,  
Whose rites and requiems are as sighs and tears.  
Sleep on, ye living dead, in day, nor rise,  
But in night's shadowy shapes and dreamy eyes.  
Then, fade not, stir not till the imagined scene,  
Brain-wrought, with earliest joy the soul possess :  
'Tis bliss to have known the vision that hath been ;  
To dream of happiness is happiness.  
But dearer than that tone, and than the dream  
Sweeter, of bliss, or long-remembered love,  
It is to feel we shall be deathless, here ;  
That earth will speak of us, when gone above.

*George.* Sweeter and dearer still than all before,  
Would be to hear some say, I'll say no more :  
A blessing I can scarce expect to be  
From those who are more near than dear to me ;  
You, Charles, for instance.

*Charles.* Why, you greedy elf,  
Would you have all the nonsense to yourself ?

*Helen.* Now let us have no argument, I pray.

*Frank.* Suppose we have a pretty lively song.

*Emma.* Suppose you sing it, then.

*Frank.* Well, never say  
I don't intend to help you, right or wrong.  
Will no one sing ? then I'll essay  
A song I learned but yesterday.

Oh gaze on her beautiful soft rolling eye,  
And revel with bliss in its languishing love ;  
Oh gaze on its darkness and brightness, and sigh  
That truth from that heaven should ever remove.  
Oh gaze on her ringlets of raven black hair ;  
And her delicate eyebrow's soft pencilly line ;  
Would her heart were but true as her bosom is fair ;  
That the saint were as worthy of love as the shrine.

I have gazed, I have loved, I have worshipped ; but fain  
I now would declare it, my madness is past ;  
But pleasure no more in my heart will remain  
Than the sparkle of spray on the sand-beach cast.

I loathe her, and love her ; I never can rail ;  
 It is passed, and I reckon not ; my fortune I dare :  
 Henceforward, the shroud of my hopes is my sail ;  
 And the peace which I sought, I have found—in despair.

*Caroline.* If that's called lively, or in part or wholly,  
 The gods preserve me from your melancholy.

*Helen.* If aught additional, of this kind,  
 Within your memory you should find,  
 And feel, to sing or say, inclined ;  
 Like mayors' addresses, never read,  
 We'll take it, please, as sung,—or said.

*Harry.* It is no use saying I adore you, Sophy ;  
 For if I do you only cry out, oh fy !  
 Nathless, as some one else must sing ;  
 Wait only till I screw this string.

I love not horse,  
 I love not wine ;  
 Nor song, nor dance,  
 Be joys of mine.  
 And dull to me  
 Are the skies above ;  
 I love not lore,  
 I love not love ;  
 But thee I now  
 Love, and e'er will,  
 For love's the best  
 Point in me still ;  
 And since my heart  
 Owns nought above thee,  
 It must be philo-  
 Sophy, to love thee.

*Laurence.* Hast thou got anything there for me ?  
 For surely thou never shouldst bring me near thee,  
 Unless thou hast some gift with thee  
 To bribe me to hear thee.

*Edward.* I bring thee neither bribe nor boon,  
 I offer only flowers,  
 Which gathered thus the hope devise  
 Each other's hearts are ours.  
 Receive them lady, in that breast  
 With peace and purity to rest ;  
 And oh, if not too much for prayer,  
 With them, my life my love be there.

*Laura.* Thou mayst be happy if thou wilt,  
 Nor envy these poor flowers their spot ;  
 For close as in a clenched hand  
 Thy love within my heart hath lot.

*Fanny.* Who mentioned ghosts ? In nothing I so glory  
 As a right thrilling, chilling, good ghost story.

*Edward.* But on a soft and fragrant summer eve,  
 With glistening flowers and flashing waters by,

One lacks the proper impulse to believe :—  
But then, I don't believe them.

*Will.* Oh ! nor I.

*Lucy.* They want a fireside and a howling storm ;  
Summer time seems too sensuous and warm.

*Frederic.* Oh ! you are a parlous little infidel,  
Or I could tell a tale ; but I am not well.  
My head seems wrong, and somehow, altogether,  
Feels like a bullet on a peacock's feather.

*Walter.* Do you believe that spirits interfere  
With men, events, or actions anywhere ?

*Charles.* Let gold bagged priests, from Ganges to  
Bermudas,  
The gospel preach, according to St. Judas ;  
It is my opinion, if the truth were known,  
That earth pertains to man and beast alone ;  
And neither saint, nor fiend, nor bright nor dark angel,  
Between the south pole and the port of Archangel,  
Have any call, or leave, or will, or power  
To meddle with a mortal for an hour.

*Fanny.* Oh ! you're an unbeliever.

*Charles.* That is true,  
So far as this—I don't believe in you.

*Helen.* Sir, you are rude. But since my faith's attacked,  
What of immortals ? Is it not a fact  
That saints and demons oft-times interact ?  
Such the belief at least in times of yore,  
Which, if we share not, our disgrace is more.  
Things sacred and supernal did we mind  
More, and omit the meaner cares of life,  
Our souls would grow like holy, like refined,  
With loftier thoughts and nobler actions rife.  
There is an ancient legend I have heard  
About a saint, a demon, and a stone,  
Which bears upon this matter word for word ;  
A marvel I myself have seen and known.

*Harry.* Enchant us, pray, still further. We will be  
Moveless and mute to meet your wishes ;  
Yours the sole speech, your awful audience we ;  
Between us, Saint Antonio, and the fishes.

*Helen.* A stone stands in a rustic town,  
Which once the neighbouring hill did crown ;  
Nigh to the house of God it lay  
Before 'twas set where now it stands ;  
And how and why there gray-beards say  
Was ne'er the work of mortal hands ;  
But list, and ye eftsoons shall know,  
From runes translated into rhyme,  
How saint and fiend would have it so  
Far back within the olden time.

## FESTUS.

4

That village church stands fair and free;  
 Those village bells peal merrily,  
 As well they might and still they may,  
 On many a bright autumnal day,  
 When both in hostel, cot, and hall,  
 They hold the village festival.  
 The godly rustics on that day  
 At church had met to praise and pray,  
 And thank the Giver of all good,  
 By him that died upon the rood,  
 For harvest stored and daily food;  
 And, as Saint Wilfrid's care they claimed,  
 Oft in their prayers his name was named.  
 At morn, at noon, at eventide,  
 Their task the merry ringers plied,  
 Pealing each time, with joy increased,  
 A welcome to the rustic feast.  
 But it roused the wrath of the fell fiend,  
 As high o'er minster fane he leaned,  
 In the dim glooming of the day,  
 Blent with the moonlight's silvery gray.  
 Quoth he, 'I hate that holy peal;  
 Yon village church my wrath shall feel;  
 He said: and from the stately lands,  
 Whereon the high cathedral stands,  
 He heaved a huge gray granite stone,  
 First as a druid altar known:  
 And lifting it between his teeth,  
 And three times scantily drawing breath,  
 Wide on the air his arms he spread,  
 And dropped it on the minster's head:  
 E'en as an eagle drops a hare  
 Brought for her callow younglets' fare.  
 Upon the main tower straight he stands,  
 And as he glanced o'er field and fell,  
 He weighed the weapon in his hands,  
 And took his aim and distance well:  
 And when the moon's last glimmering ray  
 Died on the tall church spire away,  
 Three hours he gazed it through the dark,  
 Nor winked his eye once on the mark.  
 As midnight tolled—for mightiest then  
 Is all demoniac power o'er men—  
 The rock he raised—foul fiend forbear!  
 And hurled it, hurtling, through the air.  
 Saint Wilfrid, from his seat above,  
 Where with the blessed, whose deathless days  
 Are passed 'tween deeds of sacred love  
 And their adored redeemer's praise,  
 Cast on the house of praise and prayer,

The object of his hallowed care,  
 One glance, and marked the missile fly  
 Midway betwixt the earth and sky,  
 A momentary prayer he made,—  
 And there the mighty mass was stayed ;  
 Aloft in air the altar hung,  
 As moveless as before 'twas flung.  
 Then spake Saint Wilfrid : ' Baffled fiend,  
 What evil can from heaven be screened ?  
 Though in the depth of midnight thou  
 Didst ween to crush yon pile below,  
 Yet know that to celestial eyes  
 Divinest daylight never dies ;  
 And saints defend the things they love,  
 As God protects the saints above.  
 While men invoke their holy names,  
 And on their prayers for succour call,  
 So long shall saints fulfil their claims,  
 So long their shrines shall never fall.'  
 He ceased ; the air-arrested rock  
 Fell earthwards with a harmless shock,  
 A long half mile beyond the bound  
 Of the good church's hallowed ground.  
 The demon balked made off in rage,  
 And the stone slept for many an age.  
 And still, a startling sight I ween,  
 The foul fiend's teeth-dents may be seen ;  
 And still, though grey and wondrous old,  
 The stone itself is never cold,  
 But keeps within its fated form  
 A gust of the fiend's fire-breath warm.

*Charles.* Well, may we speak ?

*Helen.* Oh, certainly. Give tongue.

*Charles.* I know not what is false if that be true ;  
 Nor need we care or reckon what is wrong.

*Helen.* You are content to take the shallowest view.  
 Apollo laid his lyre upon a stone ;  
 The stone was seized with music ; and the touch  
 Of mortal could awake the god's own tone  
 For ever after. Marvel ye not much.  
 Wherever God may choose, or man may dwell,  
 This is an ever-acting miracle.  
 When once the gift of godlike poesy  
 Hath touched the heart, it answers everything  
 In its own tongue, but with a harmony  
 Instinct of heaven. Let the world then fling  
 Its arms of honour round the poet's breast,  
 And heaven may hear earth's music and have rest.  
 Now true it is the great earth knoweth not  
 That it is part of heaven and God's own lot ;

But some there are who know it. So there be  
Bards who affect much infidelity;  
Although they never can abandon quite  
Their loyal love to the pure Infinite.

*Charles.* True, my liege.

*Helen.* Hush! now Frederic we await  
The story that you spoke of. Tell it straight.

*Frederic.* Please you, my liege, I'll try then and remember;

And for the rest—why, fancy it's December.

'Twas midnight, and a noble sat in his ancestral hall,  
Where many a stern old portrait gloomed along the gilded wall;

And ivory, marble, ebony, and tapestries adorned  
The seats he used, the floors he trode; for meaner things  
he scorned.

And youth, and fame, and might were his—the splendid  
might of mind;

His spirit swept and bowed all hearts as bending forests  
wind;

Yet youth and genius oft, too oft, in worship bow the knee,  
At pleasure's shrine, in folly's fane; more madly none than he.  
He sat, but not in solitude: a damsel by his side,  
Of beauty bright and gay of heart, him with the wine cup  
plied;

Gazing on him with eye as though to him her soul were due:  
Oh, nought 'neath heaven itself might match that eye's  
dark sunny blue!

From which, too, ever and anon smiles o'er her face would fly,  
Like the electric flames which flit o'er summer's evening  
sky;

And pearls were beaded o'er her brow, and gems lit up her  
breast,

Like dew drops on the morning rose when wakening from  
rest,

'One parting goblet,' cried the youth, 'ere I away to-night:  
Bring me the old monk's skull-cup, girl; peace to his  
jovial sprite!'

She by the lofty window went,—where, in the moon's pale  
sheen,

The grey old cloisters arch about their fountain-centred  
green;

The statued satyrs seemed to grin and gibber 'neath her eye,  
And as she looked, a death-like cloud came creeping up the  
sky,

And in one long and trembling moan the night gust strove  
to die;

Up to the ebon cabinet with flowery pearl inlaid,  
And seized the goblet-skull, and laughed,—how laughed  
that merry maid!

He poured it full with bubbling wine, impatient to be  
quaffed,  
Full to the silver-written rim, and drained it at a draught;  
'Ah, would its owner were but here!' and gaily both they  
laughed.

'Again,' he cried,—'but what is that stirs in the far-off  
gloom?'

The lady looked, and shrieked, and rushed out of that royal  
room.

Enveloped in a sable cowl, and stole of sightless hue,  
A ghostly figure glided swift that noble youth unto.  
Why drops the goblet from his grasp? Why trembles he  
with dread?

The grave hath given birth;—he sees a spirit of the dead!  
Another moment, unappalled, erectly still he stands;  
Not he would quail to man nor fiend, for half his goodly  
lands.

Yet, like a tree by sudden gust, his soul was seized with  
fear

An instant—and his spirit shook as drew the spectre near;  
His small white hand, veined like a leaf, close to his bosom  
clung,

And every nerve and sinew grew like to a bowstring strung,  
As with a shadow's voice it said—'I am the Monk of  
old,

A fragment of whose mortal frame I at thy feet behold.  
For that I plead not, reck not now; a thing of nobler fate  
Hast thou perverted and defiled than aught of human state,  
Than bone or body; sin, in truth, the soul doth desecrate.'  
'Nay, holy father!' said the youth, 'if thou hast left old  
Death

To preach to me at dead of night, waste not thy pious  
breath!

Pledge me in this! the night is cold, yet colder is the  
grave;

And wine will warm thee. Shrink not back: immortals  
should be brave.

Ah! knowst the cup? Well, heed it not! right welcome  
shalt thou be

To drain it with me every night, and—*benedicite*.'

With that he raised the cup to fill and quaff it as before,  
Till fast as poured the wine became but dust encrusted  
gore;

He cast it on the fire,—the lake could not have quenched  
it more.

Again the spectre spake, and still in cold and tomb-like  
tone,

'Drink thou with whom thou wilt, with girls, with gallants,  
or alone;

I come to warn thee of thy fate; a fate to me made known.'

The old monk raised his cowl; nor face, nor feature was  
there there;

Nay, nothing but two eyes which burned like stars distinct  
in air.

'Thou in a foreign clime shalt die, and thy poor fleshly  
frame

Be borne across the seas to rest by theirs from whom it  
came.

Thy heart alone shall be inurned upon the spot where  
thou

Wilt pay the forfeit of thy life; where Death looks for thee  
now.

Embalmed, enshrined thy heart shall be, in gemmed and  
costly case,

And as a thing of worship set before a nation's face;

Till, in the lapse of coming years, some sacrilegious thief  
Shall filch that relic, set at nought that weeping people's  
grief.

The sacred dust which dwelt within, the dust which now  
swells high

Within thy bosom, he shall strew abroad relentlessly.

And this in retribution, youth, for that thou there hast  
done.'

The voice, the vision ceased, and lo! that instant it was  
gone.

Again the night wind sweeps along those old and ivied  
halls;

Again o'er lake and fountain free the witching moonlight  
falls;

Ohequering through the panes the dim old paintings round  
the walls.

But there was one who never went into that room again;  
And prayers, and tears, and jeers were each alike essayed  
in vain.

That dark unearthly visitor was ever in her mind, .

Like to the awe which filleth fanes where gods have once  
been shrined.

And morning met the youth all pale, and pacing to and  
fro:—

But ah! the goblet skull he touched never again, I trow.

*Lucy.* There; does not that convert you?

*Charles.*

Not a whit.

I don't believe a single word of it;

Nor yet of summer fairies, winter ghosts,

Nor any other spiritual hosts.

*Sophia.* See then how inconsistent you must be  
In the sad tale you told us about love.

*Charles.* The credit of my creed concerns but me,  
Either in earth below or heaven above.

*Helen.* You speak more laxly, Charles, than I think  
prudent;

And quite forget your recent life as student.

*Charles.* But students, whatsoe'er their kind,  
Must now and then unstring the mind.  
In years gone by I have believed so much,—  
My liege imperial knows I don't deceive her,  
That as infinity does on nothing touch,  
My next door neighbour's now an unbeliever ;  
And no one can imagine who has not  
Tried incredulity, how blessed his lot.

*Emma.* Just now, Charles, you uncourteously named  
The fairies.

*Charles.* I confess.

*Emma.* Then I propose,—  
Of your impiety are we so ashamed,  
A solemn censure on such loose opinions ;  
And strict expulsion from these free dominions.

*Caroline.* Have mercy !

*Helen.* What can be too bad for those  
Who'll not believe their senses ? I suppose  
All here have seen the rings the fairies track  
In dancing on the mead ; and he must lack  
Mere sense who doubts of their existence, when  
Their footsteps are as marked as those of men ?

*Charles.* Commandress of the beautiful ! of these  
thrones

Supreme disposer ! star incarnate, hear !  
Thy sceptral lily no companion knows ;  
Thy flowery crown no rival in our sphere.  
And though we all have doubtless, curious, viewed,—  
While large o'erloaded wealthy looking wains,  
Quietly swaggering home through leafy lanes,  
In autumn evening's shadowy solitude,  
Leave upon all low branches, as they come,  
Straws for the birds, ears of the harvest home,—  
Those dark green rings where fairies sit and sup,  
Crushing the roseate dew in the acorn cup ;  
Where by his new made bride, the bridegroom sips,  
The white round moon upon his longing lips  
Shimmering ; yet know, 'tis only by report,  
By fiction, legend, by mistake, in short,  
We smiling tell the old tradition ;  
And half affect to understand.  
But while I grant your loftier position,  
Ask any fiery proof which may demand  
The fateful service of this loyal hand ;  
I'll not be reasoned into superstition.

*Helen.* Men ! I give notice I am sitting here  
To answer and console the sad in heart.  
Who is in love ?

*Charles.* I am, sweet judge, I fear,  
And hope unbiassed you will take my part.

*Helen.* What do you wish ?

*Charles.* Fair justice, if it please—

*Helen.* To mock our ears with your mock miseries ?  
Sit ; we'll not hear them. You shall truly tell  
That love does oftener than he says, farewell.

*Charles.* With truth I cannot ; but I'll state my case.

*Helen.* May it bear out your miserable face !

*Charles.* I have lived on ladies' eyes,  
Dined on kisses, supped on sighs ;  
I have warmed me with their smiles,  
I have been wet through with tears ;  
They've half-slain me with their wiles—  
Charming, cheating, pretty dears ;  
They have scratched me in their play,  
Sighed and sucked the wound away ;  
They have squeezed me black and blue,  
Roughed my hair and boxed my ears,  
Laughed and looked me through and through :  
Oh the cruel angel dears !

*Fanny.* Indeed you have been sadly treated.

*Charles.* Ah me ! how I have been jilted, cheated ;  
It would move the passion of a stone ;  
And yet when not with ladies I'm alone.  
I like the company of women most,  
And after theirs my own :  
Among men I feel always lost.  
Ladies' society for me, or none.

*Helen.* Peace ! say no more. We all agree in part.  
This court thinks fit to confiscate your heart ;  
And, till the fine be paid, to one at least—  
Some lady here—you cannot be released.  
Begone ! thank us that you escape so well  
From what it is impossible to tell.

*Charles.* Oh ! I appeal against my fate.

*Helen.* Just as a cur a coach may bait.  
It nought avails.

*Charles.* But what am I to do ?  
The puzzling power of a pair of eyes !  
One pair is black, one grey, another blue :  
I am a sacrifice !  
They are three—the sweet sisters I love in my heart,  
And all so unlike and so fair ;  
When with all, I am longing to love them apart,  
And apart, I would all of them there.  
By the world, I dare say, I shall greedy be reckoned,  
But my wish I can name in a word :  
I would live with the first, I would die with the second,  
And immortal I'd be with the third.

*Helen.* Go : we have pardoned you with like contrition,  
As we condemned—without condition ;

This point excepted—that you sing a song  
 In token your deliverance is wrong,  
 Though just my judgment. Pray don't keep us long;  
 Or banishment perhaps may be your lot.

*Charles.* Oh! I protest against it.

*Others.* Despot fair,  
 Your sentence is too cruel.

*Helen.* Hold slaves, what?  
 Dispute! I fine you each. So now, despair.  
 Thus We adopt first the most stringent measure;  
 Our taxes are your songs, your fines our pleasure.  
 These ladies will assist you now and then.

*Laura.* Oh, certainly.

*Emma.* Behave yourselves like men.

*Charles.* There's no escaping, it appears to me,  
 However nod and wink, etc., be.

I look on thee while singing,  
 Thou bright-eyed love of mine,  
 As misers while they're ringing  
 The gold they love to shine.

Then while on this poor earth,  
 Where pain and sorrow bound us,  
 We'll quaff the wine in mirth,  
 And music make around us;

We'll drink the wine-god, Bacchus,  
 And all our merry friends,  
 And if old Death attack us,  
 Why, then, the frolic ends.

*Laurence.* Pray, is that all? The moral, to my  
 thought,  
 Is yet to come, as certainly it ought.

*Frank.* When a man asks for morals, it's a sign  
 That he is wanting either them or wine.

*Charles.* Let the young be glad! though cares in  
 crowds

Leave scarce a break of blue,  
 Yet hope gives wings to morning clouds;  
 And while their shade the sky enshrouds—  
 By love and wine which through them shine,  
 They are turned to a golden hue.  
 Then give us wine, for we ought to shine  
 In the hour of dark and dew.

*Helen.* A broad hint truly. Pay the bard his fee.  
 I dare say he is thirsty.

*Frank and Others.* So are we!

*Charles.* What ho! a butt of sack!

*Helen.* But no butt here  
 Or sack you'll get another way I fear.  
 Remember that, within our sacred sight,  
 You should continue abstinent, to-night.

Indeed I don't approve that sort of song ;  
 And think it very rude and rather wrong.  
 To make my subjects good is my main plan ;  
 Let them be merry with it, if they can.  
 Mind, as it is, I am resolved almost,  
 To make you forfeit your important post.

*Charles.* Lady, I swear I never to offend meant.  
 Our next shall move you all as an amendment.

*Helen.* Now seriatim, gentles, if you please ;  
 We are quite resolved to list your melodies.

*Lucy.* Come, no more flinching.

*Frank, Walter, and Others, apart.* Let us sing a glee  
 And so by singing all at once, evade  
 The separate penalty.

*Edward.* Dost think that she,  
 The tyrant of this fair festivity,  
 Will bear to have her words so far bewrayed ?  
 No more than ice bear blood-heat in the shade.

*Walter.* We can but try.

*Charles.* Remember what I told you,  
 And think upon the bright eyes that behold you.

The crow—the crow ! the great black crow !  
 He cares not to meet us wherever we go ;  
 He cares not for man, beast, friend, nor foe,  
 For nothing will eat him he well doth know.  
     Know—know ! you great black crow !  
 It's a comfort to feel like a great black crow !

The crow—the crow ! the great black crow !  
 He loves the fat meadow—his taste is low ;  
 He loves the fat worms, and he dines in a row  
 With fifty fine cousins all black as a sloe.  
     Sloe—sloe ! you great black crow !  
 But it's jolly to fare like a great black crow.

The crow—the crow ! the great black crow !  
 He never gets drunk on the rain or snow ;  
 He never gets drunk, but he never says no !  
 If you press him to tippie ever so.  
     So—so ! you great black crow !  
 It's an honour to soak like a great black crow.

The crow—the crow ! the great black crow !  
 He lives for a hundred years and mo' ;  
 He lives till he dies, and he dies as slow  
 As the morning mists down the hill that go.  
     Go—go ! you great black crow ;  
 But it's fine to live and die like a great black crow.

*Helen.* Your principles are purer, I perceive. You  
 Are much the same in practice.

*Frank.* I believe you.

*Edward.* Freedom, authority,—twin poles  
 Round which revolve all human souls,—

The many choose that easier state  
Where others for them arbitrate ;  
These, stronger, liberty prefer,  
With livelier pleasure, power to err ;  
But lest rebellion dare dispute the helm  
With her, appointed over us, to be  
The crownèd mistress of our joyous realm,  
I here maintain her sacred sovereignty.  
Firm to her throne, her crown, I stand,  
And vouch her irresponsible command.

*Helen.* Thanks, Edward ; I would knight you on the  
spot,  
But, really, I'm afraid my sword's forgot.  
However, take my verbal accolade !  
Imagine I embrace you ; and in proof  
Of your high act of fealty just made,  
Sing, sir, I charge you, on your own behoof.

*Edward.* Sing I cannot ; but if you please to list  
A fable, from a fine old moralist,  
Whose name I have forgotten—but no matter—  
Æsop, or some one—probably the latter—  
Mark ! In the silver age, ere guile had birth,  
While beasts yet spake the mother tongue of earth,  
Which the birds set to music, and each kind  
Lived in pure order, and with friendlike mind,  
The lion and the horse, the ass and mule,  
Had shared the earth among them ; but each grown  
Ambitious to possess all power alone,  
They therefore met to settle who should rule.  
The eagle they petitioned to preside,  
And swore by his decision to abide.  
The bird of curvèd beak and radiant eye  
Bowed wordlessly, and swept down from the sky.  
Imprimis, said the ass, be it known that I,  
Beside myself—though now being noon they sleep—  
Speak for the beeves, and represent the sheep.  
A pack, the lion cried, of lazy elves !  
Take notice, that we represent ourselves.  
The horse responded, true ! The mule concurred.  
Now, quoth the eagle, let the cause be heard.  
My liege, the lion took him at the word.  
He need not say he came of royal race ;  
His voice was thunder ; most he loved the chase ;  
And hated aught was cowardly or base.  
He for his magnanimity was famed ;  
And only what he killed he fairly claimed.  
The deity beside had honoured him  
And chose his countenance 'mid the cherubim.  
The horse, too, claimed descent from noblest blood :  
His fathers formed the sun-god's fiery stud ;

Foremost in war, in peace, in use, in show,  
The choicest he of all the brutes below.  
The ass then ; what you each have said is true  
But hath an angel e'er appeared to you ?  
I trow not ; humbly therefore I precede  
Lion and horse, I think ; both great indeed,  
But ne'er have known the glory to be rode,  
As I have, by the Son, on earth, of God ;  
In memory whereof, across my shoulders,  
A cross may be beheld by all beholders.  
At this the horse and lion jerked their manes ;  
Their mouths could boast of honours without reins ;  
Neither did glory in subjection lie.  
I boast not, quoth the ass, heaven knows, not I ;  
But to be guided by a mightier mind  
Than of your own, or man's, your master's kind,  
Is honour. Said the horse, in pride self-schooled,  
That only proves you fittest to be ruled.  
The question now is—as I understand—  
Which of us four is fittest to command.  
That is the question, said the lion coldly.  
Why, then, broke in the mule, a trifle boldly,  
If in my own poor person I can prove  
All your chief virtues, at but one remove,  
Or those of two of you, at least, 'twere best  
Choose me at once, and set the thing at rest.  
'Tis true I do not roar, nor do I bray :  
Some think my whinny very like a neigh ;  
And with good reason, I am proud to say.  
To you, dear ass, upon the sire's side,  
To you, sir steed, I'm on the dam's, allied ;  
Wherefore,—A fig for this vain pedigree,  
Exclaimed the lion ; what's all this to me ?  
Shall I my long-lived ancestry declare,  
And tawny mothers in their Libyan lair ?  
My race preceded Adam's ; that I swear.  
Perhaps, you'll say next who's your son and heir.  
His would-be majesty hung down his head.  
Mark him ! the mule's indulgent kindred said,  
Go, child. Content you with an humbler rule.  
Seek not the throne. Remember you're a mule.  
Your many rare and virtuous parts we own ;  
But make no pretext to the bestial throne.  
We all are sensible—The mule replied,  
We are all too sensible, on our own side.  
It goes against my nature to contend ;  
I never was called obstinate—with a friend.  
From this dispute I henceforth hold aloof ;  
And here abjure,—but no, accept my hoof.  
Good, said the eagle ; on that view I base

My judgment in this all important case.  
 Let each competitor his natural place  
 Resume. The lion, monarchlike, alone  
 Hath sympathies with no race but his own ;  
 And therefore may, impartial, fill the throne.  
 The rest, that with each other kindly blend,  
 And form one type of being, we commend  
 To labour and endure, this; that, to fend  
 The throne against the legioned herd, or those  
 'Gainst any that may chance to prove their foes.  
 And if aught hostile 'tween those twain should pass,  
 Let the great lion guard the burdened ass ;  
 For labour is most honoured, as we see  
 The ass, by heaven's all working deity.  
 In rank though last, in honour first he stands,  
 Conscious of contact with divinest hands.  
 Let horse, ass, lion, thus to live agree,  
 Share and obey a mutual sovereignty ;  
 And the fourth aid and mediate 'tween the three ;  
 Intact in nature, ever furthering peace  
 And moderated temper. So shall cease  
 All strife among you, and supreme respect  
 Grace the pure power such good that can effect.  
 To this the four assented, and retired,  
 Well pleased. The eagle into heaven aspired.

*Caroline.* O happy days ! but then, you must allow,  
 Brutes spoke as sensibly as men do now.

*Edward.* If all said square not wholly with the time  
 Firstly laid down, it matters not in rhyme ;  
 Which, with an all-controlling care of things,  
 Gives its own laws to chaos or to kings.

*Frank.* A heart full of feeling, a cup full of wine ;  
 Come—sip, love ; come—sip, love ;  
 There's nothing I lack but that sweet lip of thine ;  
 Thy lip, love—thy lip, love.  
 Thine eyes are like two romping stars,  
 That look as they had drank of wine ;  
 And flying from night's brow, had brought  
 Their liquid love to thine.  
 But I forget ; they're not the words I mean.

*Helen.* Wilt sing, Sophia ?

*Sophia.* I obey thee, queen.  
 Of knight and lady to each other true,  
 I sing the generous lay, their due.

Yes, lady dear, for aye—adieu !  
 The false world I defy, lady ;  
 But thou, sweet soul, so fair, so true,  
 I would thou couldst not sigh, lady.  
 Oh ! mind thee not of me when gone,  
 But lay thy memory by, lady :  
 In light and joyaunce live thou on ;  
 Leave me, leave me to sigh, lady !

O fair ! O true ! for aye I go ;  
 From thee, from thee I hie, lady :  
 I must not yield me to thy woe,  
 I dare not list thee sigh, lady.  
 Yonder thou seest my father's hall,  
 Whose turrets pierce the sky, lady ;  
 Ah ! rather might they on me fall,  
 Than I would hear thee sigh, lady !  
 To far-off lands now wends his way ;  
 And, if he there should die, lady,  
 Oh ! let thy true love, happy, say  
 He never caused thee sigh, lady.  
 Farewell for aye ! It wrings thy heart,  
 It drowns thy darkening eye, lady.  
 Farewell ! I feel what 'tis to part ;  
 But say thou wilt not sigh, lady !

*Will.* May none here ever know as true  
 The false cold lover's last adieu !  
 But yet to show things as they be,  
 The false maid thus ye all may see.

Thou lov'st another, maiden !  
 And I am free as thou ;  
 My heart with scorn is laden,  
 To speak but with thee now.  
 Though through thy glossy ringlets  
 My hand hath often played,  
 Here—take it back ! I loathe it—  
 The long imbosomed braid.  
 Away, away ! no more with thee,  
 Thou falsest, fairest maid !

One heart is ripe and laden  
 With love for me e'en now ;  
 I'll woo me then the maiden  
 More kind, more true than thou.  
 Then give it to my rival,  
 The black and glossy braid ;  
 And give the hand which twined it,  
 The cheek whereon it played.  
 Away, away ! no more with thee,  
 Thou fairest, falsest maid !

*Helen.* There beams, methinks, a story in those eyes,  
 Lucy, of thine, of faithfulness to death,  
 Unlike the desolate discords which now rise  
 So oft 'tween hearts love still companioneth.

*Lucy.* Most gentle sovereign ! sacred be thy hest ;  
 Would the light levy yet were worthier thee.  
 My lay belongs then to the city bright,  
 Which, goddess-like, sprang sparkling from the sea.

Thus to a fair Venetian maid,  
 The proudest of the train,  
 With which the Doge went forth arrayed  
 To wed his vassal main :  
 ' This very day,' her lover said,  
 ' Will Venice go the sea to wed.'

‘ Now tell me, lady, what to do,  
 To win this hand of thine ;  
 I’ll risk both soul and body too,  
 For such a prize divine.’  
 ‘ I’ll have the bridal ring,’ said she,  
 ‘ Wherewith the Doge will wed the sea !

Came forth the Doge and all his train,  
 And sailed upon the sea ;  
 The banners waved, and music’s strain  
 Rose soft and heavenwardly ;  
 And blue waves raced to seize the ring  
 Which glided through them glittering.

The lover through the bright array  
 Rushed by the Doge’s side :  
 A plunge—and plume and mantle gay  
 Lay lashing on the tide ;  
 He heard a shriek, but down he dived,  
 To follow where the ring arrived.

He sought so long, that all above  
 Believed him gone for aye ;  
 Nor knew they ’twas his haughty love  
 Who shrieked and swooned away.  
 At length he rose to light—half dead—  
 But held the ring above his head.

The lady wept—the lover smiled—  
 She had not deemed he would  
 Have dared it,—was a foolish child—  
 And loved as none else could.  
 ‘ Take it, and be a faithful bride  
 To death,’ the lover said, and died.

The lady to a convent hied,  
 And took the holy vows ;  
 And was till death a faithful bride  
 To her eternal spouse.  
 And then the ring her lover gave  
 They buried with her in her grave.

*Walter.* A gem may have a hundred sides,  
 And glitter bright in each :  
 Where true philosophy presides  
 Pleasure it is to teach ;  
 I therefore choose the charms of happy faith,  
 Secure in love’s all present joy ;  
 From aught that might e’en dreams alloy,  
 With dread of future skaith.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the eve,  
 And I lay among bright blushing flowers ;  
 I awoke—and, ah ! how could I grieve,  
 If the blooms hurried back to their bowers ?

I dreamed of thee, love, in the night,  
 And the stars stood around by my head ;  
 I awoke to thy beauty so bright,  
 And the stars hid their faces and fled.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the morn,  
 And a poet's bright dreamings drew nigh ;  
 I awoke, and I laughed them to scorn :  
 They were black by the blink of thine eye.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the day,  
 And I wept, as I slept, o'er thy charms ;  
 I awoke, as my dream went away,  
 And my tears were all wet on thine arms.

*Helen.* Ah ! who would long for bliss above,  
 That tastes the joys below ?  
 Or, hanging on the lips of Love,  
 Would seek to kiss his brow ?  
 Unless to change and clear the taste,  
 Lest sweets in sameness run to waste.

*George.* Come, do you dance ?

*Laurence.* No ; we two here remain.

*Marian.* But why indulge in mutual sorrows vain ?  
 And if I grant this one request—

*Laurence.* It is the last time I shall be so blessed.  
 Oh ! thou art kind, and I will think  
 This wine to be thy love I drink ;  
 Blood my heart would gladly miss,  
 Could it so be filled with this ;  
 And each pulse would madlier move,  
 Warm with wine, alive with love.  
 Look upon it, love, and weep  
 Thine eyelight o'er its purple deep ;  
 So each luminous glance shall be  
 Like a phosphor globelet in the sea.  
 Other lovers soon will sue thee—  
 Let them—they will ne'er possess  
 More than I enjoy who view the  
 Lightning of thy loveliness.  
 It may be love and light in heaven,  
 But here on earth such love is death ;  
 And such light is blindness driven,  
 Lance-like, through the breast and breath.  
 All who love thee sure will die :  
 Thy beauty hath fatality.  
 For now is near my heart's last hour ;  
 I feel it fading like a flower,  
 When folding up its leaves to rest,  
 And narrowing in its own sweet breast.  
 I mean not that I die to-day,  
 But that my spirit wears away.  
 And, save thyself, sees nought to lure it  
 Back to earth's falsehoods which immure it.

*Marian.* Thou wilt live yet many happy years,  
 Far more in number than the tears

Men shed o'er broken hearts, if not  
 When first forsaken, aye forgot ;  
 While we, according to old fashion,  
 With our own tears must slake our passion ;  
 Or weeping in our bosoms lorn and lone,  
 Try if tears cannot turn the heart to stone.

*Laurence.* Promise, dearest, when I die.

*Marian.* Such phrase can scarce to me apply.

*Laurence.* Not to mourn, nor weep, nor sigh ;  
 Eyes like thine should never weep,  
 Nor sweet bosom sorrow keep.  
 Let nor stone, nor verse, nor aught,  
 Mark where rests—what loved and thought ;  
 If they ask thee where I lie,  
 Say, within thy memory.  
 Weep not thou o'er grave of mine ;  
 Sprinkle on it sparkling wine ;  
 That shall keep the grass all new  
 Like to an immortal dew ;  
 And some fallen star shall stay,  
 Watching, while thou art away.  
 Scatter rose and ivy wreath  
 On the turf I rest beneath ;  
 Dance and sing my favourite song,  
 Through the deep blue twilight long ;  
 In that rich and ringing tone,  
 Heaven to thee, love, lends alone.  
 When I'm gone, then, come again ;  
 Talk to me in lightsome strain ;  
 Should I answer, start not thou !  
 I'll but say I'm blessed as now ;  
 Should no sound the silence break,  
 Think me, oh ! too blessed to speak.  
 Let me lie till angels say,  
 Wake ! the world's long week is passed :  
 Spirit ! this is holy-day ;  
 This is God's—the best and last.

*Marian.* Well were such feeling, such request,  
 To any save to me addressed.

*Helen.* Come Marian, having finished our parade,  
 We have leisure now to list another lay :  
 But since you have not been dancing, I'm afraid  
 Laurence and you are idle, lovesick, say ?

*Marian.* Could I comply I'd not remain thus mute.

*Frederic.* Shall I sing for you as a substitute ?

I saw a rose was fading—  
 Fading 'neath mine eye ;  
 When thus, with love's upbraiding,  
 I heard that passed one sigh :—  
 Oh ! give me back one blush—

But one from out the many  
 I loved to give to thee  
 Ere other I knew any—  
 Liked or looked on any.

For I am sad and lonely—  
 Lone and like to die ;  
 Oh ! give me back one only,  
 I am too weak to cry.  
 The beam, the breeze, the dew,  
 Shun now my shrinking bosom ;  
 Tears I have need but few,  
 Their brine can bring no blossom—  
 Me, nor blight nor blossom.

Then to that rose was failing—  
 Failing 'neath mine eye,  
 I said, 'tis useless wailing ;  
 Forget, forgive, and die.  
 One look to heaven in prayer,  
 And one to me in kindness ;  
 The deathwind shook its leaves,  
 And I was one with blindness—  
 Lone in burning blindness.

*Harry.* Although I would not needlessly intrude—

*Fanny.* To sing, not being asked, is rude.

*Harry.* To cease with such a dull down-hearted ditty,  
 Would be a wrong, I think, as well as pity.

*Lucy.* Pray, sing us something livelier, then.

*Sophia.* And don't be personal again.

Annie's eyes are like the night,  
 Nell's are like the morning gray ;  
 Fanny's like the gloaming light,  
 Hal's are sunny as the day :  
 Bright—dark—blue—gray,  
 I could kiss them night and day :  
 Grey—blue—dark—bright—  
 Morning, evening, noon, and night.

Annie's brow's arched like the sky,  
 Nell's is white without a spot ;  
 Hal's is as a palace high,  
 Fanny's lowly like a cot :  
 High—arched—low—white,  
 I could kiss them day and night ;  
 White—low—arched—high,  
 Kiss them night and day could I.

Annie's lips are warm and bright,  
 Fanny's free and full of play ;  
 Hal's are sweetest out of sight,  
 Nell's are always in the way :  
 Bright—warm—sweet—play,  
 I could kiss them night and day ;  
 Play—sweet—warm—bright,  
 All the day and all the night.

*Lucy.* Had I a little sister  
 Just a fairy, six years old ;  
 And with eyes of grey or blue,  
 Or of dark, or sunny hue,  
 Why, I think I might have kissed her,  
 In the way that you have told.  
 But for sake of sleep and quiet,  
 'Twould be mad, I think, to try it.

*Will.* Mulcted in song I hasten to discharge  
 The debt I owe, and pay it thus in large.

Oh ! Love's a bold pirate—the soul of the sea !  
 He impresses the proud, and he fetters the free ;  
 His flag's a red heart, in the bows are his guns,  
 And the wind's always with him—the foe ever runs.

Oh ! Love's a bold pirate—the son of the sea !  
 The winds are his laws, and his laws make him free.  
 The star that he steers by, her eye he adores,  
 And the haven he's bound for, earth's infinite shores.

Oh ! Love's a bold pirate—the sword of the sea !  
 For the poor he hath plunder, and fame for the free ;  
 At home in a chase, he nor spares foe nor friend  
 Though a stern chase, and long chase, the long must end .

Oh ! Love's a bold pirate—the pet of the sea !  
 He will do all, and dare all, 'gainst all that may be ;  
 He hails her all fair, just before they fall to't,  
 And his foe makes his prize and his consort to boot.

*Helen.* Were Festus here, and his strange friend,  
 Who like his shadow, follows him,  
 We should not feel so lost, nor lend  
 One's heart to mirth I scarce commend ;  
 Mirth, whose hot breath pure soul will dim.  
 For he whom all here present, love,  
 And I adore, fails ne'er to move  
 Our hearts to dwell on loftier themes  
 Than pleasure's chase, or joy's vain dreams.

*Charles.* Your loveliness is always right,  
 In fallibility's despite.  
 Though now as foud of harmless mirth,  
 As any faithless miscreant on the earth ;  
 Yet cultured mind it scarce beseems,  
 All art's achievements, wisdom's gains,  
 And truths, which knowledge justly deems  
 Outbalance conquest's costliest pains,  
 For youth's vain joys to sacrifice ;  
 And mute but bright applause of beauty's eyes.

*Helen.* Witness, ye stars ! the vow to you addressed ;  
 Shall never more such thoughtless hours be given  
 By me to merest pleasures ! Thus confessed,

Behold this crosselet, from its velvet rest,  
Like birdling bright, from mother's nest  
Snatched, I have placed upon my breast ;  
Sign that for higher aims my soul hath striven ;  
You, Charles, have seen me, and shall know the rest.

*Charles.* I marked a constellation rise in heaven.

*Marian.* And what remains for me but rest,  
Acceptance, and a soul to peace resigned ?  
Let me not heaven's decrees contest,  
Nor scan with carping mind.  
Life to lay down, as love to leave,  
If called, I ought without regret ;  
Comes not the beauty of the eve  
Till all the sun be set.

And though they last not quite an hour,  
Yet have the vespers more  
Of holy evercoming power,  
Than all day-rites before.  
If soon the sunshine of my day  
Hath grown beclouded, who shall say  
Life's worse probation is not o'er ?

*Helen.* Be it, for mercy's sake, I pray.  
And now that we enough have laughed and mourned,  
This house of kings and queens must stand adjourned.  
The day hath darkened into twilight, night  
Hath glittered into starlight, since we met :  
The restorative dew hangs thick and bright  
On herb and tree and flower : yon foamy jet  
Flings up its bubbling music chillier now ;  
And droop the blooms that long have wreathed the brow.  
Ladies, and you bold serfs ! I now propose  
To bring this joyous vigil to a close ;  
And as all bidden have now paid their fine,  
To leave these heroes to their fate—their wine.

*Charles.* Except yourself, dear despot, all  
Have done their best to hum or squall ;  
But if your beautyship would condescend  
To teach us what true melody might be,  
There's not a creature present but would lend  
His ears to listen for a century.

*Helen.* Sir, I respect you for your flattery ;  
All compliments of course are strange to me ;  
The moral strength required for flattery now,  
To a fair queen is great you must allow :  
I only envy you the power to make them.

*Charles.* 'Tis sure the better part to take them.

*Helen.* We don't believe them when you pay them.

*Charles.* Nor we when we say them.  
No longer then, ladies, I pray,  
At our flattery or fickleness grieve :

If you never believe what we say,  
We never say what we believe.

*Helen.* From our rule and example, gentles, learn,  
And lay this to your hearts each one in turn :  
Pay compliments, pay visits, pay respects,  
But pay your just debts first.

*Harry.* Our whole effects !

*Helen.* The royal rule of pure equality,  
In complaisance and kindness, still shall be  
Confided in, and revered by me :  
So shall my deed of abdication make  
All love the loser for the losing's sake.  
Attend ! my song the constancy discovers  
Of a right royal pair of lovers.

Come, beloved, let us roam  
Forth into the golden fields ;  
Yon high palace marks our home,  
Ours is all that nature yields :  
Come, betrothed and espoused,  
Earth is rising towards the sun,  
And with light and joy aroused,  
Meets the love within us one.

Open now thy sleep-dewed eyes,  
Show the subject soul its queen ;  
Brighter than the newborn skies  
Their delicious depths I ween.  
Don thee, love, thy royal white ;  
Needs no more divine array ;  
Fairer than the morning light,  
Rule thou ever with the day.

Come the morrow, day divine,  
All shall wake and bless the sun ;  
Those thou lovest shall be mine,  
They and thou and I be one :  
Crown and throne the world shall gain,  
Thou the universal state ;  
Bride of beauty, rise and reign,  
Love thy life, and heaven thy fate.

*Charles.* The meaning whereof as I take it,—

*Helen.* True ; it's exactly what you make it.

*George.* There's only one thing wanting that could mend  
That song ;—a blaze of fireworks at the end.

*Helen.* Farewell, friends ! let us hope to meet again  
When others may be present whom we know.

*Edward.* Adieu ! ye semideities ! in vain  
The world may worship idols.

*George.* Pray, do go !—

*Walter.* At last the so-called soulless have departed,  
Leaving sundry broken-hearted.

*Frederic.* To make the life of perfect mould,  
Like that in Paradise of old,

Each must give their better part ;  
We our soul and they their heart.

*Laurence.* The night hath gone, and all the stars  
Have vanished at the sun's bright warning ;  
Still the moon, ghostlike, haunts the heaven,  
As though she deemed to her 'twas given :  
What hath the moon to do with morning ?  
So love is fled, and all the fair  
Gone ; some with smiling, some with scorning,  
Save one, the fairest far above :  
But what have I to do with love,  
More than the moon hath with the morning ?  
The moon hath lost her light, and seems  
To dim the scene she was once adorning :  
So my poor heart, its lovelight gone.  
Still in the heavens where late it shone,  
Lags like the moon upon the morning.  
But I am likest to that moon in this,  
That I am brightest when my love's away ;  
For when with her my borrowed light is lost,  
As is the moon's amid the dazzling day.

*Charles.* I hear a step ; 'tis his I am sure  
By those most wished who forced to endure  
These mumbled monologues disdain,  
Justly, I think, their selfish strain.

*Will.* Friends it becomes friends' trust to seek ;  
And social, mid such themes as these,  
Fit matters fitly treat ; nor speak  
Of aught not apt to mirth and ease.

*Frank.* 'Tis Festus ! welcome.

*Festus.* Glad am I  
To light on guests so well disposed,  
So well engaged.

*George.* One beaker try  
Ere yet this flask's account be closed.

*Harry.* Good ! pass the ruby round. There's nought  
so dull  
As to behold a noble vessel full  
Of radiant blessings, halt upon its way ;  
So fairly give and fairly take, I say.  
Progress is nature's unexcepted law ;  
'Twere better e'en to go from bad to worse,  
Than 'tween two like degrees of ill see-saw ;  
Stagnation is an universal curse.  
There is nothing stands still—so old sages declare,  
But the world's ever changing in earth, sea, and air ;  
All the powers of nature, in truth if we trace,  
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?  
The winds from all quarters career through the sky ;  
They blow hot, they blow cold, they blow swift, they blow  
high ;

They follow, they flank, and they fly in our face ;  
 What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?  
 The rivers that run to the ends of the earth,  
 Flow thousands of miles from the place of their birth ;  
 From the old and the new world they pour out apace ;  
 What are they ?—what are they but running a race ?  
 The worlds they call wanderers, rolling on high,  
 That enlighten the earth and enliven the sky ;  
 Going hundreds of miles in a minute through space ;  
 What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?  
 Then with goblets before us, whatever they hold,  
 Let the hue of the nectar be purple, be gold,—  
 Let us say as we sit among friends, face to face,  
 What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?

*Frederic.* Thou'rt scarcely, Festus, quite so gay  
 As when, long since, thou went'st away.

*Festus.* I've seen,—what now I cannot say ;  
 But things that tend the mind to free—

*Frederic.* From what we'll not discuss. I see !  
 No more of all our old hilarity !

*Laurence.* All this is lively. Beauty, love, and mirth  
 Might seem to flavour even vapid earth  
 To a pure spirit's lips. For my own part,  
 I own it sinks life deeper in my heart,  
 At every fresh recurrence : but at times  
 A thought comes tolling o'er the darkened soul  
 Which we dare hardly guest ; but ill it chimes  
 With scenes of joy like this, which from the roll  
 Of memory we too oft would fain erase.

*George.* Not I, one jot, save your ill-omened face.

*Walter.* For sacred riddles this is neither time nor  
 place.

*Laurence.* No : but of earth some sacred writings tell  
 Its flower was paradise, its fruit was hell.  
 Such is the fruit of worldly pleasure now ;  
 And thus perhaps my meaning you may trace.

*Harry.* We do ; but think it useless to avow  
 Such views at festive moments like the present.

*Charles.* Indeed they call up notions quite unpleasant.  
 So, let us rout them by another draught,  
 And thoughts bright as the beverage quaffed.

*Harry.* The future is the world of youth—  
 The future is our joy ;  
 We dream of honour, love, and truth,  
 And bliss without alloy.  
 But harp not now on love or truth,  
 Forget your dreams of glory ;  
 The wine will double us our youth ;  
 To-morrow dream again of sooth ;  
 But now to what's before ye.

*Charles.* Some say Truth lies in water, some in wine;  
Suppose I mix them; now she must be mine.

*Frank.* Nothing again will serve to make us merry.

*Frederic.* 'Twas stupid in you, Laurence.

*Laurence.*

Was it?

*Will.*

Very.

*Edward.* Infernal cant you'll always find  
Upsets all pleasant parties of this kind.

*George.* He has put the company, 'tis plain, to flight.

*Walter.* And so I say—

*Charles.* I'm going, too.

*All.*

Good night!

*Festus.* Now and again, earth's scenes to me  
Grow dearer, as I rarelier see.

So whilst yon streak of lowliest light

Steals, as to kiss the upward steps of night,

Wait I, to watch, alone the birth

Sublime of morning on the earth.

She comes! how beauteous are her smiles,

The ever glorious morn;

Up from old ocean and his isles,

Her car of radiance borne

By the wingèd steeds of light,

Spurning far the shades of night;

While darkness gathers round her head,

Her heavy wings that late lay spread

Wide o'er the sleeping world;

She quits her home, she flies away;

Abandons her usurpèd sway;

To shame and exile hurled;

Thus falsehood fly, in that blessed hour,

When truth for aye resumes her long lost right and power.

## XXII.

Not all regardless, meanwhile, for dear heart  
 So lost, but elsewhere bent, through many a sphere,  
 Celestial precincts quit, our venturous soul,  
 Heaven's varied vast of worlds having long essayed,  
 Of spirits sublime consociate, now returned,  
 To his life's new liege ;—and joyously they greet  
 As boat by breeze, and billow, backed by tide,  
 His bright experiences of heavenly homes  
 Relates, where spiritual natures kind and high,  
 Light-born, which can divine eternal things,  
 Passed and to come, dwell ; of the friendly fiend,  
 Tells ominously,—uneyeable of the mass,  
 Strange forms will show ;—and something comforting speaks,  
 From angel lips learned, of lost Eden's crown.  
 The walls of Paradise are built up of stones,  
 All virtues. Help we God to edify  
 Within ourselves, his spiritual temple here.

*House, Garden, and Terrace, by a River.*

FESTUS and HELEN : afterwards LUCIFER.

*Helen.* Come to the light, love ! Let me look on thee.  
 Let me make sure I have thee. Is it thou ?  
 Is this thy hand ? Are these thy velvet lips,—  
 Thy lips so lovable ? Nay, speak not yet !  
 For oft as I have dreamed of thee, it was  
 Thy speaking woke me. I will dream no more.  
 Am I alive ? And do I really look  
 Upon these soft and sea-blue eyes of thine,  
 Wherein I half believe I can espy  
 The riches of the sea ? Nay, heavenly hued  
 As though they had gained from gazing on the skies  
 Their high and starry beauty. These dark rolled locks !  
 Oh God ! art thou not glad, too, he is here ?—  
 Where hast thou been so long ? Never to hear,  
 Never to see, nor see one who had seen thee—  
 Come now, confess it was not kind to treat  
 Me in this manner.

*Festus.* I confess, my love.  
 But there I have been whence tongue, nor pen, nor hand,  
 Could token thee ; and seen enough ! It is thee  
 I see now, and thy shadow to me more  
 Than all above essential.

*Helen.* Where hast been ?

*Festus.* Say, am I altered ?

*Helen.* Nowise.

*Festus.* It is well.

Then, in the resurrection we may know  
 Each other. I have been among the worlds ;  
 Angels, and spirits bodiless.

*Helen.* Is this true?  
Can it be so?

*Festus.* It is:—and that both here,  
And elsewhere. When the stars come, thou shalt see  
The track I have travelled through the light of night;  
Where I have been, and whence my visitors.

*Helen.* And thou hast been with angels all the while,  
And still dost love me?

*Festus.* Constantly as now.  
But for the time I did devote my soul  
To their divine society, I knew  
Thou wouldst forgive; yet dared not trust myself  
To see thee, or to wing one word, for fear  
Thy love should overpower the plan conceived,  
And acting, in my mind, of visiting  
The spirits in their space-embosomed homes.

*Helen.* Forgive thee! 'tis a deed which merits love.  
And should I not be proud, too, who can say,  
For me he left all angels?

*Festus.* I forethought  
So thou wouldst say; but with an offering  
Came I provided, even with a trophy  
Of love angelic, given me for thee;  
For angel bosoms know no jealousy.

*Helen.* Show me.

*Festus.* It is of jewels I received  
From one who snatched them from the richest wreck  
Of matter ever made, the holiest  
And most resplendent.

*Helen.* Why, what could it be?  
Jewels are baubles only; whether pearls  
From the sea's lightless depths, or diamonds  
Culled from the mountain's crown, or chrysolith,  
Cat's eye or moonstone; or hot carbuncle,  
That from the bed of Eden's sunniest stream  
Extracted, lamped the ark, what time the roar  
Of lions pining for their free sands, smote  
The hungry darkness; toys are they at best.  
Jewels are not of all things in my sight  
Most precious.

*Festus.* Nor in mine. It is in their use  
Their value lies, the pure thoughts they call up  
Of beauty unearthly, and the qualities high,  
Virtuous, each emblems. For as diamonds show  
Purest of things, light densed, which fire restores  
To air, nought left, so these let sign to thee  
The faith we need, all purity, all light,  
Through fervency resolving into heaven.  
Each bears his cross; may thine ne'er heavier be,  
Nor darker than the jewel which there illumines

Thy bosom, as even to wanderer southward bound,  
Rises, how lovelily ! o'er the calm blue wave,  
The star-cross of the skies, so light, so bright.

*Helen.* I thank thee for that wish, and for the love  
Which prompts it—the immeasurable love  
I know is mine, and I with none would share.  
Forgive me ; I have not yet felt my wings.  
Now have I not been patient ? Let me see  
My promised present.

*Festus.* Look, then—they are here ;  
Bracelets of chrysoprase.

*Helen.* Most beautiful !  
Henceforth to me these gems more dear shall be,  
More sacred, than to followers of Islâm,  
The diamond star, where, under golden pall,  
The prophet lies of kingless Arabie ;  
Than that mysterious stone which Japhet's son  
Stole from his grandsire, weather foul and fair  
Ruling, the tempest-generating gem ;  
Than the green brilliance of that luminous throne,  
Carved from an emerald block, where once sat young  
Vieija, king of solar blood, mid towers  
Palatial, by Serendib's pearly seas,  
Reared airily ; topped now by swart diver's heel ;  
Than those which decked the standard lost for aye  
To Persia, and the proud Iranian line,  
At Kadesieh, where Khaled, sword of God,  
The victory gained of victories : and those gems  
Doled to his hosts, for every warrior one ;  
Though these more numerous than the winged cloud,  
Which flays a province of its greenery ;  
Yea, than that solar jewel, one solid spark  
Erupted from the sun, which rife with all  
Mysterious powers and virtues, Krishna sought  
I' the north's bear-guarded cavern, and one long moon  
Fought for, both night and day ere he could gain  
Triumphant ;—gem divine ; their every gleam,  
When I speak not, shall thank thee, they are mine.

*Festus.* Come, let me clasp them, dearest, on thine  
arms ;  
For these of those are worthy, and are named  
In the foundation stones of the bright city,  
Built, blessed abode ! for the immortal saved ;  
And such their hue, the golden green of plains  
Paradisal stretched about it boundlessly ;  
Tinted intenselier with the burning beauty  
Of God's eye, which alone doth light that land,  
Than our earth's cold grass garment with the sun ;  
Though even in the bright, hot, blue-skied east,  
Where he doth live the life of light and heaven ;

## FESTUS.

On the mountains, at midday is seen  
The morning star; and the moon tans, at night,  
The cheek of careless sleeper. Take them, love.  
There are no nobler earthly ornaments  
Than jewels of the city of the saved.

*Helen.* But how are these of that bright city? I  
Am eager for their history.

*Festus.* They are  
Thereof prophetically; and have been—  
What I will show thee presently, when I  
The angel's story tell, who gave to me.

*Helen.* Well; I will wait till then; it is enough  
That I believe thee always;—but would know,  
If not in me too curious to enquire,  
How came about these miracles? Hast thou raised  
The fiend of fiends, and made a compact dark,  
Sealed with thy blood, symbolic of the soul,  
Whereby all power is given thee for a time,  
All means, all knowledge, to make more secure  
Thy spirit's dread perdition at the end?  
I of such awful stories oft have heard,  
And lore, soul-jeopardying; nor know not whither  
Conceit like fascinate might lead even me.  
Myself have charms; foresee events in dreams;  
Can prophesy; and not unskilled to tell  
The secret ties between many a magic herb  
And mortal feeling, faculty, scarce myself  
Condemn for arts so innocent; but thou!  
Thy helps are mightier far and more obscure.  
Was it with wand and circle, book and skull,  
With rites forbid, and backward-jabbered prayers,  
In cross-roads, or in church-yard, at full moon,  
By strange instruction of the ghostly dead,  
Thou hast achieved these wonders, and attained  
Such high transcendent powers and secrets? Speak!  
Or is man's mastery over spirits not  
Of such a vile and vulgar consequence?

*Festus.* Were not my heart as guiltless of all mirth,  
As is the oracle of an extinct god  
Of its priest-prompted answer, I might smile  
To list such askings. Mind's command o'er mind,  
Spirit's o'er spirit, is the clear effect  
And natural action of an inward gift,  
God-given, whereby the incarnate soul hath power  
To pass free out of earth and death to heaven  
And immortality, and with beings mate  
Diverse of kind, lot, state. This mastery  
Means but communion; means but power to quit  
Life's little globule here, and coalesce  
With the great mass about us. For the rest,

To raise the devil were an infant's task,  
 To that of raising man. Why, every one  
 Conjures the fiend from hell into himself,  
 When passion chokes or blinds him. Sin is hell.

*Helen.* How bringst a spirit to thee?

*Festus.* It is my will  
 Makes visible.

*Helen.* Shape me one in words.

*Festus.* They come,  
 The denizens of other worlds, arrayed  
 In diverse form and feature, mostly lovely;  
 In limb and wing ethereal, finer far  
 Than an ephemeris' pinion; others, armed  
 With gleaming plumes, void-conquering, pranked with fire.  
 These of like offices and unlike strengths,  
 Powers, orders, tendencies, in such degrees  
 As men, with even more variety, show  
 Glories dissimilar, duties, and delights.  
 Even as the ray of meteor, satellite,  
 Planet and comet, nebula, sun, or star,  
 Differ, and nature also, so do theirs.  
 With them is neither need, nor sex, nor age,  
 Nor generation, growth, decay, nor death;  
 Or none I have known; such may be; each mature,  
 Created, and complete with all required  
 Experience, seems. Perfect from God they come.  
 Yet have they different degrees of beauty,  
 Even as of strength and holy excellence.  
 Sexless, I said, are angels, but the seals  
 Mental of either holy kind in all  
 Prevail. Of milder and more feminine strain  
 Than others seem some, beauty's proper sex,  
 Shown but by softer qualities of soul,  
 More lovable than awful; more devote  
 To deeds of individual piety, such,  
 And grace, than mighty missions fit to task  
 Sublimest spirits; the toil, intense and vast,  
 Of cultivating nations of their kind;  
 Of working out from the problem of the world  
 The great results of God, — result, sum, cause.  
 These, oftentimes, charged with delegated powers,  
 Formative or destructive; those, in chief,  
 Ordained to better and skilled to beautify  
 Existence as it is; with careful love  
 To tend upon particular worlds or souls;  
 Warning and training whom they love, to tread  
 The soft and blossom-bordered, silvery paths,  
 Which lead and lure the soul to paradise;  
 Making the feet shine which do walk on them;  
 While each doth God's great will alike, and both,  
 With their whole nature's fulness, love his works.

To love them lifts the soul to heaven.

*Helen.*

Let me, then !

Whence come they ?

*Festus.*

Some from orbs whose rudest mould's  
More worth, more fair, than queenly gem ; the dust  
Dullest they foot is rosy diamond :—  
Others from heaven immediate ; but in high  
And serious love towards those they come to, all.  
Free be the blessed, none else, to visit whom,  
And where they choose : the lost, slaves ever ; here,  
Never but on their Master's merciless  
Business, nor elsewhere. Still with these dark spirits  
Have I conversed, and in their soul's gross shade,  
That, like a mountain cavern of the moon,  
To fixed sight deepening seems the more we gaze,  
Searched them, and wormed from them the gnawing truth  
Of their extreme perdition ; marking oft  
Nature revealed by torture, as a leaf  
Unfolds in fire, writhes, burns, yet unconsumed :  
Spirits who devastative of weaker soul,  
And fighting obstinately the glad belief,  
God's foresight and disposure of the world,  
Hold all hap-hazard come ; from bad to worst  
Led mainly ; self-tempested. Others are,  
Who garlanded with flowers unwithering, come,  
Or crowned with sunny jewels, clad in light,  
And girded with the lightning ; in their hands  
Wands of pure rays or arrowy starbeams ; some  
Bright as the sun self-lit, in stature tall,  
Strong, straight, and splendid as the golden reed  
Which heaven's all mothering city, seat of saints,  
Descendible, God shall sometime tread with man,  
Was measured with by the angel ; reed that found  
Aforetime by that angel, nigh the cross,  
And on high taken, God made gold, and now  
Stretched sceptrewise o'er all the skies, the scale  
'Tis held of power and glory infinite.  
Some gorgeous and gigantic, who with wings,  
Wide as the wings of armies in the field,  
Drawn out for death, sweep over heaven ; and eyes  
Deep, dark as sea-worn caverns, with a torch  
Glaring at the end far back. With pinions some  
Like an unfainting rainbow, studded round  
With stones of every hue and excellence,  
Writ o'er with mystic words which none may read,  
But those to whom their spiritual state  
Gives correlate meaning. Me do some in dreams  
Visit ; with some in visions 'mid their own  
Abodes of brightness, bliss, and power, have I  
Made one ; and know full well I shall joy with them

Ere long their sacred guest, through ages yet  
 To come, in worlds not now perhaps create,  
 As they have been mine here: and some of them,  
 Have walked with, through their wingèd worlds of light,  
 Double and triple particoloured suns,  
 And systems circling each the other, clad  
 In tints of light and air, earth knows not of,  
 Nor man; orbs heaped with mountains, ours to theirs,  
 Mere grave mounds; and their concave flowered with stars,  
 All-hued; their light now blent, now variant; moons  
 Many, and planets crescent, waning, full,  
 In periodic change and intricate beauty,  
 At once those strange and most felicitous skies,  
 Illumining. As the nature of those spheres  
 Their natives are; some human-like, and some  
 Of great gigantic grace and happiest air,  
 Yet solemn as the sun; they walk like winds,  
 Whose dwelling is all immaterial space,  
 And vanish slowly in the hollow heavens.  
 Some of still vaster size and mightier mien,  
 Whose movement is as thunder in a cloud,  
 Devouring space; some, like to flickering ghosts  
 Of fire, while underneath their every step  
 Spring perfumes up and flowers; bedight in rays  
 Aerial of the purest, brightest skies;  
 Others, of sanguine hue. whose step is like  
 An instantaneous trembling of the heavens;  
 Others, again, whose forms for utter bright  
 Are indefinable; from place to place  
 Their feet pass like the twinklings of the stars;  
 Some of a cold, pure bodily rayonnance  
 As is the moon's of naked light, ungarbed  
 In circumspherical air, who glide like clouds;  
 And some in bands, some singly, some in groups;  
 For all perchance is starlife after death;  
 While others sworded, sceptred, crowned, and robed,  
 Spirits of power who rule each one his star,  
 Whose form is fire, whose life strength, and as storms  
 Precipitate, come, and go; nor e'er all known.  
 For angels can assume the form they please,  
 And transform things inanimate, as once  
 With earth's angelic watcher I beheld;  
 The lonely diamond which bedecked her pale  
 Transparent brow, was oh! so pure and clear;  
 Like one large drop of paradisal dew,  
 Immortalized, it shone; and such, she said,  
 It was; from a leaflet gathered of the tree  
 Of perfect life, on Eden's natal morn.

*Helen.* I would 'twere mine to visit other worlds,  
 Or see an angel.

*Festus.* Wilt thou now ?

*Helen.* I dare not.

Not now, at least. I am not in the mood.

Ere I behold a spirit, methinks, I'd pray.

*Festus.* Light as a leaf they step, or the arrowy  
Footing of breeze, upon a waveless pool.  
Sudden and soft, too, like a waft of light,  
The beautiful immortals come to me.

*Helen.* But why art thou of all men favoured thus ?  
To say there is a mystery in this,  
Or aught, is only to confess God. Speak !

*Festus.* It is God's will that I possess this power  
Thus to attract to mine great spirits, as steel  
Magnetically charged, steel draws ; himself  
The magnet of the whole, round and towards whom  
All spirits do tremblingly tend.

*Helen.* If, as thou sayest,  
'Tis good, be it to thee good, perduring ever.

*Festus.* He hath no power who hath not power to use.  
Spirit's to soul, as wind to air ; and those  
Livelier, think less of earth, these duller, more :  
Such give me all I seek : at an unsaid wish  
Would furnish treasures, thrones, or palaces.  
But all these things have I eschewed, and chosen  
Command of mind alone, and of the world  
Unbodied, and all lovely.

*Helen.* Is not this  
Pleasure too much for mortal to be good ?

*Festus.* All pleasure is with thee, God ; elsewhere, none.  
Not silver ceiled hall, nor golden throne,  
Set thick with priceless gems as heaven with stars ;  
Or the high heart of youth with its bright hopes ;  
Nor marble gleaming like the white moonlight,  
As 'twere an apparition of a palace ;  
Inlaid with light, as is a waterfall ;  
Not angel pinions coloured like yon cloud  
Bannered the sun's broad evening tent, can match  
Child-musings on life's glorious years to come ;  
How, then, his faith to whom the All-kind vouchsafes  
The heaven of his own bosom ? What can tempt  
In its performance, equal to that promise ?  
My soul stands fast to heaven, as doth a star,  
And only God can move it, who moves all.  
There are who might have soared to what I spurned ;  
And like to heavenly orders human souls :  
Some fitted most for contemplation, some  
For action ; those for thrones, and these for wheels.

*Helen.* Tell me what they discourse upon, these angels.

*Festus.* Much speak they of what's passed, or coming ;  
less

Of present things and actions. These most tell  
Of heavenly histories, rich in vast events;  
God's dealings with especial worlds; of tests  
Pending, to come, those; others of the gone,  
The dim traditions of eternity,  
Or time's first golden moments. One there was,  
From whose sweet lips elapsed, as from a well,  
Continuous, truths, which my soul fertilized  
With richest thoughts, spake to me oft of heaven,  
Salvation, immortality, angels, God.  
Our talk was of divine things alway: soul,  
The diverse states of spirit; time's testing grades;  
Truth's, faith's progressive steps; the varied kinds  
Of Being in different spheres, these physical,  
Those intellectual most. I never tired  
Preferring questions, but at each response,  
My soul drew backwards, sealike, into its depths,  
To urge another charge on him. This spirit  
Long time came to me daily, and whene'er  
I prayed his presence. Many a world he knew  
Right well, eye ne'er hath marked on earth, nor may;  
Yet perfect variedly. Still more, each time  
He came, had grown his knowledge on mind's truths,  
Inmost, and spirit's sublimest themes. His thoughts,  
Like the immensest features of an orb,  
Whose eyes are blue seas, and whose clear broad brow  
Some cultured continent, showed from time to time,  
Revolved, some nightiest truth. Interpretant, he,  
Teaching divine things by analogy, oft,  
With mortal and material, thus of God,  
Forbidding even, in soul-idolatry,  
To shape a mental image of the one  
Unlikenable, he showed that as, to mind,  
Skimming the abyss of being, like a bird,  
Which thinks with its wing's tip to sound the sea,  
Godhead triune,—as through three primal rays,  
None without other, beams the heavenly light;  
So, soul reborn of deity, sees all oned  
In God, the alone and infinite unity.  
And one of all I knew most, yet the least  
Can I of him speak adequately; for oft  
Our thoughts drown speech, like to a foaming force,  
Which thunders down the echo it creates.  
Yet must I somewhat tell of him, the world's  
Spirit evil, impersonate; strange and wild to know,  
Perdition and destruction in him dwelled  
Like to a pair of eagles in one nest.  
Hollow and wasteful, whirlwindlike, his soul;  
Now, in mysterious grandeur, wasting heaven;  
Contracted, now, to human littleness

And most minute malevolence, as though God  
 In life reversing, wrecking one poor soul.  
 The sphere which met, aside rolled, him to let  
 Pass on his piercing path, whose space-spread wings,—  
 Wide as the wings of darkness when she rose  
 Scowling and backing upwards, as the sun,  
 Giant of light, first donned his burning crown,  
 Gladdening all heaven with his inaugural smile,—  
 Make sad creation. Mightiest in this sphere,  
 He stood a match for mountains. Ocean's depths  
 He clave to their rock-bed, as a sword to bone,  
 With one swoop of his arm. As falls on face  
 Of some fair planet, lapped in heaven, eclipse  
 Intimidative, his thought fell on the heart  
 Shuddering, like angel, who, the thunder curse  
 O'er-hears, of demon foe. His voice, oppressed  
 With desolateness, not otherwise than gust  
 Autumnal, strewing earth with leafy death,  
 Words bore of fatal cast, both heart and ear  
 Startling; words harsh, words heavy, like the first  
 Handfuls of mould. cast on the confined dead,  
 Whose end we see for good.

*Lucifer (entering).* Dost recognise  
 The portrait, lady?

*Helen.* Festus, who is this?—  
 What portrait?

*Festus.* Wherefore comest thou? Did I not  
 Claim privacy, one evening?

*Lucifer.* Why, I called  
 To keep the proverbs simply in countenance.

*Festus.* Dost not remember, loveliest, some few moons  
 Agone, and he, who—

*Helen.* Surely, I recall  
 His presence now. Where all were, he was, too,  
 Welcome. Bright hours, now faded.

*Lucifer.* Queen of joy!  
 Thy soul-thought, like the fragrance of a flower,  
 Speaks the bright essence whence it emanates.  
 Unwelcome I should not be, I felt sure.  
 Pardon my abrupt entrance; and believe,  
 If for those hours' contentment, it were e'er  
 Mine to do thanks, in place of uttering, what  
 More than that crown of knowledge, high minds like thine  
 Affect, and if world-hidden, the more, could I  
 Proffer, as now?

*Helen.* And I, could I aught do,  
 Say, think, were worth reward, would nought else choose.

*Festus.* Like the bright fish sphered southwards, fed  
 from age  
 To age, on midnight's luminous food, and still

Of the starry streamlet unreplete, man's mind,  
 Insaturable of knowledge seems, though bound  
 To use secrete, most selfish.

*Helen.* Be it. For me,  
 To know more is to live more.

*Lucifer.* Both are ripe  
 For truth's reception. Wherefore not be sealed  
 With wisdom's sacred seal? One is, I know,  
 Who underneath the sun nought better loves  
 Than heaven-aspiring souls to initiate here,  
 Into those solemn mysteries, which, once proved,  
 Stretch through death's sea of shadows, and the world  
 Of mortal and immortal life make one;  
 Illuminative rites, all times malign'd  
 By shallow wits, which yet o'ertopped the flood,  
 Known but to the white-souled race of light, who born  
 In heaven, may insight claim of solar truth,  
 And evermore receive?

*Helen.* Thou givest me  
 Somewhat to look for, live for, die for, now.  
 I feel the Sibylline nature in my soul  
 Uncoil its secret strength. I long to act.

*Lucifer.* Who loves or would achieve perfection here,  
 Lives, like the sun, in restful action, best;  
 Imparting light, disclosing not its source.  
 The sage I mean, full well I know, have known  
 Long, and ye him shall know. Our student friend  
 Bring with ye, for his earnest soul, athirst  
 For the pure draught from wisdom's pearl-lipped bowl  
 And keen with wholesome hunger for the truth,  
 Shall chant its thankful compline with your own.  
 The more so as I doubt not that he hath done  
 In furtherance of our ends is all he can  
 Accomplish; and 'tis fit he have his meed.  
 Prepare him secretly for our emprise.  
 Trust everything to me, and at the hour  
 And spot, hereafter to be named, we meet;  
 All eager to enjoy the feast of light.

*Festus.* Faith sometimes more expects than truth can  
 grant,  
 And brings a jar for what scarce fills a phial.  
 But faith, not knowledge, mates with bliss. To some  
 Not matters, how much knowing, or unknown.  
 I have seen a grisly bedesman, in the porch  
 Of a church he'd weep to enter, all aflaut  
 With tatters,—like a tree which sheds its bark,  
 And begs its way to ruin, up and down,—  
 Whose starry-headed sceptre, warded, watched  
 By angels under oath, waits but in heaven  
 His regal hand; hand here outstretched for alms.

## FESTUS.

e more I know, the quicker comes the sum  
 all things. Therefore urge me not; nor thou,  
 harm of my being, haste me to forego  
 or even divine accomplishments, this life  
 in love now lapsing as a summer stream  
 In the sun, of nought reflective save of heaven.  
 Rather forgive me, both, if, dreading change,  
 I feel an ominous instinct to avoid,  
 Though now might be fulfilled my once best aims,  
 The mystic science proffered.

*Helen.*

Beseech, command thee on thine allegiance;  
 Force me not to compel thee.

*Festus.*

With present drift, I would not.

*Helen.*

Should live at once to beg of thee, and spurn  
 That unaccustomed dulness which slow creeps,  
 And mosses o'er the marble of thy clear mind.  
 We yet will gain our point.

*Lucifer.*

It much concerns, for I have ends in view  
 I cannot yet accomplish, this undone.  
 There are, whose curiousness were quite enough  
 To ruin half a galaxy of earths,  
 Let each but have his, her, bent. Seems to me,  
 They scent their self-destruction from afar,  
 And bound themselves to their own stark end. No more!

*Festus.*

This way and that way swayed, but guideless  
 still,  
 Like to a sunk skiff, lurching in the ooze,  
 My heart lies; and the sport of every wave  
 Of feeling, once contemptuously it keeled,  
 Nor floats, nor falls. Time must I have to think.  
*Lucifer.* Then time be thou, as heretofore, my friend  
 But what shall I do, all this wretched while,  
 Thou art engrossed thus?

*Festus.*

Do as I; make love.  
 But that were to fall up. Well, I'll think,  
 For now, as I remember, and to learn  
 Of equal beauty, doubtless, please all;  
 Last night, not far from hence, a form I marked  
 Of queenly beauty seated by the sea  
 As eyeing heaven, the birthland of her soul;  
 What time the westering sun, magician-like  
 His golden wand had levelled on the main  
 And soothed it into silence; face and form  
 Once seen before by me in saddest wise,  
 Beside the bier of one, fame held like fair.  
*Festus.* Name it not now: the harvest of my

Is always woe, whate'er the joy of bloom ;  
Nor raise the ghost of grief to haunt henceforth  
Life's desolate tenement.

*Helen.* Oh ! I know her well,  
She is the occultation of my soul  
Prospective ; for I dread lest we should meet.  
It is Elissa. Friendship's favourites once  
Were we, till lordlier likings since, made us  
Distant and cold as earth's opposing poles.  
Seek her, sue if thou carest. I wish her much  
Too well to wish her here. She makes my dreams  
Ghastly.

*Lucifer.* Nay, dread her not.

*Helen.* Away ! 'Twere well.

*Lucifer.* As rival elements that strive to impress  
Their power on mountains, lower and lessen them,  
Nor can aught else ; so peradventure, these.  
One talks of science, one of knowledge. What's  
All science but the last vague certainty,  
Safe to be superseded ? Soon, in sooth,  
We shall have done with knowledge, and their help  
Who have best served us ; all in time, and turn.  
The wise foresee things which,—let fools foretel ;  
With me it is enough to act. And now ;  
Any commands for our planetary friends ?  
I go, make my excuses.

*Festus.* A mistake,  
Dearest, but rectified.

*Helen.* Will he return ?

*Festus.* No.

*Helen.* Thou art troubled.

*Festus.* Truly. I, far off  
Feel the perturbing influence of his star,  
Ere visible : knew him coming, not yet come.

*Helen.* Let us rejoice together, and both hope  
Such strange effects may cease, or I shall dread  
Him to accompany elsewhere, or to meet  
As predisposed, but now—

*Festus.* And he is gone !  
Hell hath its own again. Some sorrow chills  
Ever the spirit, like to a cloudlet nursed  
In the star-giant's bosom.

*Helen.* Tell me, love,  
More of these angels.

*Festus.* One there was I loved  
Of these immortals of a lofty air,  
Dimly divine and sad ; and side by side  
Him I first spake of, she, with me, would stand,—  
Listing his converse, shadow illuminate,  
Like to the old moon in the young one's arms.

He murmured never at the doom which made  
 Her sorrow, all enfolding, as air earth;  
 But God's will always named as good and wise.  
 Pleasure but little was hers; that, all in plans  
 Devising of a bliss to come, and tales  
 Untold of time, or the sweet early earth,  
 While Eden's dews yet glistened upon her feet.  
 She was, in truth, our earth's own angel. Oft  
 In long and luminous sweetness would she treat  
 These themes, unwearying, pauseless, as a world.  
 Rise would the sun, and set; the soul-like moon,  
 In passive beauty, light from him absorbing,  
 As prophet inspiration aye from God,  
 Would set, and rise; and the far stars, the third  
 Estate of light, complete day's round divine.  
 Still spake our angel; still to the eloquent tongue  
 On earth heaven's tones retaining, lent I ear.  
 The shadow of a cloudlet on a lake  
 The wind is holding now his breath o'er, shows  
 Not calmer, fairlier not, than thy dear face,  
 Consoling spirit, when summing even earth's end!  
 Save that her eye grew darker, and her brow  
 Brighter with thought as with galactic light  
 Mid-heaven when clearest, at such times, not I  
 Had known our earth meant more, or dearer were  
 To her, than other visitants divine  
 Which hallow oft mine hours;—save too that then  
 As but to touch that chord, numbed icily, thought,  
 She would cease converse, suddenly; kneeling, pray  
 In silent earnestness; and, anon, rise  
 And vanish into heaven. My mind is full  
 Of stories she hath told me of our world.  
 No word an angel utters lose I ever.  
 One I will tell thee, now.

*Helen.*

Thy talk is the sweet extract of all speech,  
 And holds mine ear in blissful slavery.

*Festus.* It was on a golden summer afternoon  
 Close by the grassy marge of a deep tarn,  
 Nigh half way up a mountain, that we stood,  
 I and the angel, when she told me this.  
 Above us rose the grey rocks, by our side  
 Forests of pines; and the bright breaking wavelets  
 Came crowding dancing to the brink, like thoughts  
 To our lips. Before us shone the sun. We, peaked  
 As on some finial of the templed earth, Then I,  
 Peer round the infinite, far and near. Then I,  
 In ecstasie of thought: What need hath man  
 Of Eden passed, or Paradise to come,  
 When heaven is round us and within ourselves?

God's peace, if anywhere, is surely here,  
So boundless, so intense this sensible awe  
Of nature 'neath his eye; my soul, with thine,  
With all, this hour consentient. Need, the world  
Hath always, said Earth's Spirit, of loftier ends,  
And meanings, than men's daily duties raise,  
Howe'er well done; of something holier, more  
Akin with perfect, or to be, or gone,  
To live by, as a pattern. Speak, I said.  
The angel waved her hand e'er she began  
As bidding earth be still. The birds ceased singing;  
The trees scarce breathing: and the lake smoothed down  
Each shining wrinkle; and the wind drew off.  
Time leaned him o'er his scythe, and listening, wept.  
The circling sphere reined in her lightning pace  
A moment. Ocean hushed his snow-maned steeds,  
And a cloud hid the sun, as hides the face  
A meditative hand. Then spake she thus.  
Scarce had the sweet song of the morning stars,  
Which rang through space at the first sign of life  
Our earth gave, springing from the lap of God  
On to her orbit ended, when from heaven  
Came down a white-winged host, and eastwards, where  
Lay Eden's pleasaunce, first their pinions furled,  
Alighting reverently. There, marked whate'er  
Could be of good, as seemed, for man secured  
By care divine, one brief debate in vow  
Ended, that they on his behalf should build  
Out of the riches of the soil around  
A house to God. Here were the ruby rocks;  
And there in blocks the unquarried diamond lay;  
Topaz and emerald mountain, chrysoprase,  
Sardonyx, sunstone, crystal, jacinth, stood  
All light, with the stilly action of a star,  
Or sea-based iceberg, blinding, to such sight  
As men now boast, degenerate. These with tools  
Tempered in heaven, the band angelic wrought,  
Raised, fitted, polished, aptly imbedding first  
The deep foundations of the holy dome  
On bright and beaten gold. And all the while,  
Songs to God's glory hovered around the work,  
Like rainbows round a fountain. Day and night,  
Went on the hallowed labour till 'twas done:  
And yet but thrice the sun set; more than thrice  
Rose not the moon; so quick is work divine.  
Tower all, and roof and pinnacle, without,  
Were solid diamond. Based on chrysoprase,  
Gold-green, of meek humility sign, the wall  
Opalline, emblem of all virtues; soared  
Lustrous, with amethystine fruitage topped,

Of temperance type ;—expressive these to man  
Of loftiest excellences and deepest needs  
In edifying his soul, the angels strove  
Symbolically to show how best, by these  
Of earthly things transpicuouslest, men might  
The beauty of purity learn, the joy of peace  
With God, and bliss of perfectness in him,  
Sole source, sole end of worship, or in heaven  
Or earth, to all intelligences. Within,  
The dome was eye-blue sapphire, truth supreme,  
God's infinite unity, shadowing,—sown with stars  
And glittering spheres constellate. The wide floor,  
One emerald, earthlike, veined with silver and gold,  
Marble and mineral, glowed, of every hue  
And marvellous quality. There, the meanest thing  
Earth's most magnificent now, was gold, to God  
First due, to him sole. Of one ruby shaped  
Stood the high altar, heartwise. Columned round  
With alabaster pure was all. And now,  
So high and bright it shone in the midday light,  
It could be seen from heaven. Upon their thrones  
The sun-eyed angels hailed it ; and there rose  
In heaven, a hurricane shout of angel-joy  
Which echoed for a thousand years. One dark,  
One solitary, and far foreseeing thought  
Passed, like a planet's transit o'er the sun,  
Across the brow of God. But soon he smiles  
Earthwards on the angels, and that smile, to himself  
The temple consecrates. And they who built  
Bowed themselves down, and worshipped in its walls.  
High on the front were writ these words :—To God ;  
The heavenlies built this for the earthly ones,  
That in his worship both might mix on earth,  
As afterwards they hope to do in heaven.  
Had man stood good in Eden this had been.  
He fell, and Eden vanished. The shining shrine,  
Piled by the angels of all precious things,  
For the joint worship of heaven's sons and earth's,  
Fell with him, on the fixed and looked-for day  
He should have met God and his angels, there:  
The very day he disobeyed, and joined  
Death's host black-bannered. Man fell. Eden fell.  
The groves and grounds which God the Lord's own feet  
Had hallowed ; the all-hued and odorous bowers  
Where angels wandered, wishing them in heaven ;  
The trees of life and knowledge, trees of death  
And madness as they proved to man, all fell ;  
And that bright fane fell first. No death-doomed eye  
Gazed on its glory. Earthquakes gulped it down.  
Long, to the world unknown, and half forgotten

In heaven, the angels' temple, reared to embrace  
 All nations, with God's hosts, in saintliest rites  
 Ceaseless of sequence worshipping, at once,—  
 Lay in its grave, the cherubs' flaming swords  
 The sole sad torches of its funeral; till,  
 When the just flood sin 'venging pure itself  
 And purifying, came, doomed, earth's giant heart  
 Burst shell-like, and so scattered far and wide  
 The fragments of that angel-built fane,  
 High, holy, happy, stainless, as a star,  
 In Eden once,—whereof all gems men still  
 Deem precious, are; and yet may find imbedded  
 Potentially in those pure walls whose towers  
 Of light, the extense of space o'erawing, bar  
 From ill or false, the abode to be of saints,  
 Glorious. For they who, truth-taught, now, the right  
 Significance of things,—more worthful far  
 Than the things themselves, can recognize—all gems  
 Perceive, in their best use, but mystic signs  
 And types of virtue, tests foundational  
 Of spirit reborn on high, and proofs of soul's  
 Most perfect qualities: love's deep rubied glow,  
 Of charity towards mankind; hope's emerald gleam,  
 Of ultimate grace; faith's adamant flame,  
 Godwards; crown these of spiritual life; these, base;  
 These, midst; of the celestial city of God,  
 And capital of his kingdom, state divine,  
 Star-mansioned; state imperishable, of heaven.  
 The angel ended: and the winds, waves, clouds,  
 Woods undulative, and merry birds went on  
 As theretofore in brightness, strength, and music.  
 One scarce could think that earth at all had fallen,  
 To see her beauty. If sin's errless brand  
 Dimmed her predestined brow, 'twas surely hid  
 In natural art, from every eye but God's.  
 All things seemed innocence and happiness.  
 I was all thanks. And look! the angel said;  
 Take these, and give to one thou lovest best.  
 Mine own hands saved them from the shining ruin  
 I late have told thee of; and me she gave  
 What now are greenly glowing upon thine arms.  
 Ere I could answer, she was up, star-high,  
 Winning her way through heaven.

*Helen.*

How shall I thank thee

Enough, or that kind angel, who hath made  
 The gift to me dear doubly, by the advice  
 Hidden in the present? 'Tis that, humility,  
 Doubtless I lack. We'll see to it. I shall be  
 Afraid almost to wear; but part with them  
 I would not, for the treasures of all stars.  
 How show my thanks?

*Festus.* Love me as now, dear beauty,  
Present or absent, always, and 'twill be  
More than enough for me, of recompense.

*Helen.* Hast met our angel latewhile?

*Festus.* I have not.  
Yet oft methinks I see her ; catch a glimpse  
Of her sun-circling pinions or bright feet  
Which, than for earth, for rainbows fitter seem,  
Or heaven's triumphal arch more firm and pure  
Than whitest marble ; see her, seated oft  
On some high snowy cloud-cliff, harp in hand,  
Singing the sun to sleep, as down he lays  
His head of glory upon the rocking deep.  
And so sing thou to me.

*Helen.* There, rest thy brow.  
Bow thyself down, before my feet. Rest ! rest !

Oh not the diamond starry bright  
Can so delight my view,  
As doth the moonstone's changing light,  
And gleaming glowing hue :  
Now blue as heaven, and then anon,  
As golden as the sun ;  
It hath a charm in every change ;  
In brightening, darkening one.

And so with beauty, so with love,  
And everlasting mind ;  
Each takes its tint from things above,  
And shines as it's inclined,  
Or from, or towards, celestial truth,  
With blind, or brilliant, eye ;  
And only lights as it reflects  
The life-light of the sky.

He sleeps ! the fate of many a gracious moral  
This ! to be stranded on a drowsy ear.

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## XXIII.

Life's gaudier vanities shunned, or banned, the world  
 Escaped from ; passion dignified ; some talk  
 Of fable and of cabala, mystic lore ;  
 War, actual earth regarded, heaven's reproach  
 Unanswerable, 'gainst man ; the fruitful claims  
 Of friendship in abeyance long, restored ;  
 Pauses, reposeful, for a time the strain.  
 In memory we, passed life, passed feat of bard,  
 Bards best interpreters of life's sad dream,  
 Review ; and plans for peaceful progress aid.  
 Note, nathless, change impending, schemes conceived  
 By help of evil, that in dismay will end  
 Undreamed of, but all innocently ensured  
 By beauty and hero and friend ; marking, who knows ?  
 Heart, soul, and intellect, homed in tranquil ease.  
 Who mind's interior realm, life's outer treat ;  
 Things passed, to come ;—secret in secret cased,  
 Like balls of ivory carven, enclosing, each,  
 One than itself less, than itself one more ;  
 And, like life's double enigma, so involved,  
 The sole solution makes the mystery.

*Home ; an interior. FESTUS, HELEN at her piano.—After-  
 wards, the STUDENT. Evening.*

*Helen.* I cannot live away from thee. How can  
 A floweret live without its root ? Attend !  
 I am to say and do just as I please.  
 That's my great charter, is't not ? Thou art king ;  
 I am to command thee ? May I ? That I will.

*Festus.* I love to be enslaved. Oh ! I would rather  
 Obey thee, beauty, than rule men by millions.

*Helen.* Near, as afar, I will have love the same.  
 With a bright sameness like this diamond,  
 Which, wheresoe'er the light, 'like brilliant shines.  
 And thou shalt say all manner of pretty things  
 To me ; mind, to me only ; write love-songs  
 About me ; and I will sing them to myself ;  
 Perhaps to thee, sometimes, as it were now ;  
 If I should happen to feel very kind.

*Festus.* Sing now.

*Helen.* No !

*Festus.* Tyrant, I will banish thee.  
 Knowst thou what comes of tyrants, in the main ?

*Helen.* Oh ! though an absolutist, I'm bound by laws  
 Of my own making.

*Festus.* Laws that can be sung ?

*Helen.* Nay, if to sing and play please, I would die  
 To music. Wrong 'twas to deny thee aught.  
 But be not anger'd with me, for though heaven

Forgave, I'd ne'er forgive myself if I  
Brought sorrow on thee.

*Festus.* Thou wouldst not, I believe.

*Helen.* Nought fear I but an unkind word from thee.  
Dark death may frighten children, hell, the wretch  
Who feels that he deserves it, but for me,  
I do, nor say, aught worthy the pure pain  
Thy frown can give, or a cold careless look.  
If I do wrong, forgive me, or I die,  
And thou wilt then than I be wretcheder ;  
The unforgiving, than the unforgiven.

*Festus.* I do absolve thee beauty of all faults  
Passed, present, and to come.

*Helen.* Well, that will do.  
What was I saying ? I love this instrument ;  
It speaks ; it thinks ! nay, I could kiss it. Look !  
Jealous ? three things love I, half killingly :  
Thee lastly ; and this, next ; and myself first.

*Festus.* Thou art a teazeful, tiresome thing ; and yet  
Do I weary of thee ? Never ; but could gaze,  
Faint from delight, upon thy countenance,  
In the serious joy with which we eye and eye  
Space boundless, visible attribute of God,  
Who all things making in himself, makes thus  
And there, the heaven we hope for ; and can find  
No point wherefrom to take its altitude ;  
For the infinite is upwards, and above  
Aught highest create, conceivable ; so I,  
Musing upon thy face, expression like  
Heavenly, and heightening e'er the more I muse,  
Believe.

*Helen.* I am happy now with thee.

*Festus.* And I.  
Steeped in the still sweet dew of thy soft beauty,  
Like earth at day-dawn lifting up her head  
Out of her sleep, star-watched, to face the sun ;  
So I to front the world on leaving thee.  
Oh, there is inspiration in thy look,  
Poesie, prophecy. Come thou hither, love.  
This evening air, how sweet.

*Helen.* It breathes on us,  
Fresher and clearer through these dewy vine-leaves,  
Fit for the forehead of the young wine-god.

*Festus.* A large red egg of light the moon lies like,  
On the dark moor-hill ; and now, rising slow,  
Beams on the clear flood, smilingly intent,  
Like a fair face which loves to look on itself,  
Saying, ' There is no wonder that men love me,  
For I am beautiful.'

*Helen.* Well, I don't mind.  
Others first told me.

*Festus.* Now were soon enough.

*Helen.* Nay, nothing comes to us too soon but sorrow.

*Festus.* For all were happiness, if all might live  
Long, or die soon enough ; for even us.  
Virtue they tell us lives in self-denial ;  
My virtue is indulgence. I was born  
To gratify myself unboundedly,  
So that I wronged none else. These arms were given me  
To clasp the beautiful, cleave the wave, or, branched  
In tenfold perfectness, prove how supreme  
O'er nature, man : to wander where I will,  
These limbs ; these ears to list my loved one's voice ;  
These eyes to view all earth claims as fair or grand ;  
These lips to be divinized by her kiss ;  
And every sense, pulse, passion, power, to be  
Ripened into perfect life.

*Helen.* True virtue is one  
With nature, or 'tis nothing. It is love.  
Remember'st not when, the other eve, thy friend,  
The Student called, a tale was on thy tongue,  
Out of the poets, about love, and sorrow,  
And happiness and such things,—he interrupted ?

*Festus.* But I forget such tales when thou art by.  
Besides I asked him here again to-night,  
Here, at this hour, and he is punctual.

*Helen.* In truth then I despair of hearing it.  
He keeps his word relentlessly ; with not  
More pride an Indian shows his foeman's scalp,  
Than he his watch for punctuality.

*Festus.* But tales of love are far more readily made,  
Than made, remembered.

*Helen.* Tell-tale, make one then.

*Festus.* Well then my story says there was a pair  
Of lovers, once—

*Helen.* Once ! nay, how singular !

*Festus.* But where they lived, indeed, I quite forget :  
Say, anywhere ; say here : their names were,—I  
Forget those too. Say, anyone's ; say ours.

*Helen.* So far 'tis not improbable ; pertinent too.  
No wild vagaries ; quite in bounds. I hear.

*Festus.* The lady was, of course, most beautiful,  
And made her lover do just as she pleased ;  
He therefore doing unwisely, doing wrong ;  
Neglecting all in heaven and earth, but her.  
They met, sang, walked, talked folly, just as all  
Such couples do ; adored each other ; thought,  
Spoke, wrote, dreamed of and for, nought else in life  
Than their sweet selves. And so on.

*Helen.*

Pray proceed.

*Festus.* That's all.

*Helen.*

Oh no !

*Festus.*

Well, thus the tale ends, stay !

No, I cannot remember, nor invent.

*Helen.*

Do think.

*Festus.*

I can't,

*Helen.* Oh, then I don't like that.

It is not in earnest.

*Festus.*

Well, in earnest then.

She did but look upon him, and his blood  
 Pulsed stronglier from his heart her gaze to meet ;  
 For at each glance of those sweet eyes, a soul  
 Looked forth as from the azure gates of heaven ;  
 She laid her finger on him, and he felt,  
 As might a formless mass of marble feel,  
 Whi'e feature after feature of a god  
 Were being wrought from out of it. She spake ;  
 And his love-wildered and idolatrous soul  
 Clung to the æry music of her words,  
 Like a bird on a bough, high swaying in the wind.  
 Even as a storm charged cloud that in the night,  
 Will have wept itself away, unseen, nor made  
 Earth thankless 'ware of its self sacrifice,  
 That it might richen one pasture ; so, too, he,  
 To endow with all his love, her heart he loved,  
 Would the whole firmament of his life exhaust  
 In happying her, unnoisefully :—and she,  
 Soft as a feather-footed cloud in heaven,  
 While her sad face grew bright like night with stars,  
 Would turn her brow to his, and both be happy ;  
 Numbered among the constellations they.

*Helen.*

As some ambitious wave, far out at sea,  
 That whitens the wide horizon with just one flash,  
 And dies for ever, is, I foresee, my life.

*Festus.*

Helen, my love. Art there ? Oh ! it has been  
 Such a day, so bright, as that thou knowest when first  
 I said I loved thee, that long sunny day  
 We passed upon the waters, heeding nought,  
 Nought seeing, save each other.

*Helen.*

I remember,

The one thing wise, good, I have ever done,  
 Was to love thee. Would none else were as I,  
 Wise. Didst not say that student would be here ?

*Festus.*

I think I hear him every minute come.

*Helen.*

I deemed him in our revellous days gone by,  
 Intolerably reserved.

*Festus.*

Not wholly, sure.

*Helen.*

Once when thou wert afar, he came, and then,  
 Right sadly entertained me, the whole while,  
 Themes so recondite, studies so abstruse  
 Perpending, that he left me much perplexed.

Much he explained to me of cabala;  
 And correspondences, and symbol types;  
 Angelic tongues and astral alphabets;  
 All which, quoth he, learned aptly, make for us  
 An upward reaching lesson to the skies.  
 And as all souls are but the breath divine,  
 Dewlike, conglobed into separate entities,  
 By inimical matter, limited here  
 Of pure necessity, and by distance cooled,  
 From heaven's life-giving centre, so, he affirmed  
 That manhood is but angelhood disguised  
 In some frustrate condition, earthwards urged;  
 And angelhood but reascendant—

*Festus.* Man?

*Helen.* Nay, truly I forget me. In his scheme,  
 But one thing was, and that was infinite;  
 But whether man or deity, not now  
 Can I recall; indifferent which it seemed.  
 Constrained, in fine, to check him, I averred  
 Such converse to be awful. Truly it is:  
 And all commune, he added, when, to its depths,  
 The soul itself unbosoms, and high thought  
 Calls to truth's far profound, as to the sea,  
 The clouds storm-fraught, that groan with thunder-fire,  
 And passionate flashings blent with blinding rain.

*Festus.* He ceased then?

*Helen.* Ceased.

*Festus.* And this was what he taught?

*Helen.* Nay, this was what I learned. Teach could he  
 not;

For he lacks faith, nor can indoctrinate.  
 All things he seems to know, and nought believes;  
 Save as a possibility. To me,  
 His mind shows inconclusive, as an arch  
 Without its facial keystone.

*Festus.* Sad! yet I  
 Feel my heart ripen towards him as a friend,  
 More than to other unit of my kind.  
 All minds must thread the burning shares of doubt;  
 Who wholly scathless 'scape are blessed; are few.  
 Thine be it, him to imbue with faith like thine;  
 And so remunerate with commutual debt.  
 He for the future will be one of us.

*Helen.* It is not kind. We should be more alone.  
 But let it pass. I am at peace with thee;  
 And pardon thee, and give thee leave to live.

*Festus.* Magnanimous!

*Helen.* When earth, and heaven, and all  
 Things seem so bright and lovely for our sakes,  
 It were a sin not to be happy. See,

The moon is up, it is the dawn of night.  
 Stands by her side one bold, bright, steady star—  
 Star of her heart, and heir to all her light;  
 Whereon she looks, so proudly mild and calm,  
 As she were mother of that star, and him  
 Knew, in his sphere a sovran sun; but there  
 By her dear side, in the great strife of lights  
 To shine to God, he, filially, had failed,  
 And hid his arrows and his bow of beams.  
 Mother of stars! the heavens look up to thee.  
 They shine the brighter but to hide thy waning;  
 They wait and wane for thee to enlarge thy beauty;  
 They give thee all their glory night by night;  
 Their number makes not less thy loneliness  
 Nor loveliness.

*Festus.* Heaven's beauty grows on us;  
 And when the elder worlds have ta'en their seats,  
 Come the divine ones, gathering one by one,  
 And family by family, with still  
 And holy air, into the house of God,  
 The house of light he hath builded for himself;  
 And worship him in silence and in sadness,  
 Immortal and immovable. And there,  
 Night after night, they meet to worship God.  
 For us this witness of the worlds is given,  
 That we may add ourselves to their great glory,  
 And worship with them. They are there for lights,  
 To light us on our way through heaven to God.  
 And we, too, have the power of light in us.  
 Ye stars, how bright ye shine to-night; mayhap  
 Ye are the resurrection of the worlds,—  
 Glorified globes of light! Shall ours be like ye?  
 Nay, but it is! this wild, dark earth of ours,  
 Whose face shows furrowed like a losing gamester's,  
 Is shining round, and bright, and smooth in air,  
 Millions of miles off. Not a single path  
 Of thought I tread, but leads to God. And when  
 Her time is out, and earth shall have travailed again  
 With the divine dust of man, her sons, reborn  
 Immortal, shall to her due reverence make;  
 While she, their mother, purified by fire,  
 Shall sit her down in heaven, a bride of God,  
 And handmaid of the everbeing One.  
 Our earth is learning all accomplishments  
 To fit her for her bridehood.

*Helen.*

He is here.

*Festus.*

Welcome.

*Student.* I thought the night was beautiful,  
 But find the in-door scene still lovelier.

*Helen.* Ah! all is beautiful where beauty is.

*Student.* Night hath made many bards ; she is so lovely.  
 For it is beauty maketh poesie,  
 As from the dancing eye come tears of light.  
 Night hath made many bards ; she is so lovely.  
 And they have praised her to her starry face,  
 So long, that she hath blushed and left them, often.  
 When first and last we met, we talked on studies ;  
 Mingling with men, as even by thee advised,  
 Abandoning abstruse studies, as of stars,  
 In their antique relations, thought, with earth  
 Seed-gold, or medicinal all-heal ; now  
 As profitless, unless to raise the mind  
 To ends more high and pure ; ends better gained  
 By severe knowledge of time's actual truths,  
 Than meditation on mere possibles ;  
 All other intellectual aims resigned,  
 As recreative, apart from duty's aims,  
 Save metaphysic lore which fines the mind,  
 And teaches Being's vast necessities,  
 Poetry only I confess is mine ;  
 The only thing I think of now, or read ;  
 Feeding my soul upon the soft, and sweet,  
 And delicate imaginings of song ;  
 For as nightingales do upon glowworms feed,  
 So poets live upon the living light  
 Of nature and of beauty ; they love light.

*Festus.* But poetry is not confined to books,  
 For the creative spirit thou seekest, is in thee,  
 About thee, and all others ; yea, it hath  
 God's everywhere-ness.

*Student.* Truly. It was for this  
 I sought to know thy thoughts, and hear the course  
 Thou wouldst lay out for one who longs to win  
 A name among the nations.

*Festus.* First of all,  
 Care not about the name, but bind thyself,  
 Body and soul, to nature hiddenly.  
 Lo, the great march of stars from earth to earth,  
 Through heaven how silent ! Earth speaks inly alone.  
 Let no man know thy business, save some friend ;  
 For it is with all men and all living things.  
 Experience and imagination, sire  
 And mother are of song, the harp and hand.  
 The poet, in his lay reflects his soul,  
 As some lone nymph beside a woodland well,  
 Whose clear white limbs, like animated light,  
 Make glad our heart and our sight sanctify,  
 The soft and shadowy miracle of her form.  
 Take care that such be perfect ; that thou feel  
 Full sympathy with all life ; a sense that e'en

In nature's wildest, massiest, may be felt  
 His rock-sustaining presence. God they serve  
 Best, who adorn humanity most, and help,  
 By holiest usurpation of his gifts,  
 Happy to make all fellow life around.  
 The bard must have a kind, courageous heart,  
 And natural chivalry to aid the weak.  
 He must believe the best of every thing ;  
 Love all below, and worship all above.  
 All animals are living hieroglyphs.  
 The dashing dog, and stealthy-stepping cat,  
 Hawk, bull, and all that breathe, mean something more  
 To the true eye than their shapes show ; for all  
 Were made in love, and made to be beloved.  
 Thus must he think as to earth's lower life,  
 Who seeks to win the world to thought and love,  
 As doth the bard, whose habit is all kindness  
 To every thing.

*Helen.* I love to hear of such.  
 Could we but think with the intensity  
 We love with, one might do great things, I think.

*Festus.* Kindness is wisdom.

*Helen.* Touching, love, these tribes  
 Creatural, thou speakst so meetly of, were none  
 Like them, in lovelier worlds, or what in fine,  
 Hast thou of other marvels ?

*Festus.* What is earth,  
 But one majestic miracle, wrought of God ?

*Helen.* But didst thou never meet, mid far off orbs  
 None of those strange commingled shapes which here  
 Romance and fiction boast of, and bards sing ?  
 Methinks in worlds half finished, one might see,  
 As earth once saw in the solemn days of old,  
 Mysterious sphinx, or dragon flamy breathed,  
 And centaur, lord of all four-footed life,  
 Who with man's heart and head, and a steed's hoofs  
 Scoured earth impetuous, windlike : Minotaur  
 For whose just death in labyrinthine lair,  
 Bright Ariadne won her star-pearled crown ;  
 Man-bull, or lion winged, cherubic shaped,  
 Or solar, proud Assyria erst adored ;  
 Simorgh, and rokh, and phoenix cometlike,  
 Which nested in the sun ; and in the deep  
 Sea-horse fish-tailed ; and not unknown, even now,  
 Or here, to nature, where, by Jura's isle,  
 Fond mermaid, hybrid of the earth and sea,  
 Than fair haired Yseult vainer of her locks,  
 Erect amid the waves, on caudal curve  
 Poises her form, weed-girdled ; in her hand  
 Her shadow glassed ; she, rivals knowing none,

Beckons the youth belated in his skiff,  
 Far out of hail of land : seductive, lauds  
 • The charm immortal of the foamy sea ;  
 The quiet cave, surpassing in sweet gloom,  
 Earth's superficial glare ; her bridal home ;  
 Her dower of pearl and amber ; wide domain,  
 And every joy ; oft, over shoulders white  
 Showering the shining tresses, which, as oft  
 The lapping waves displace ; but he, with fear  
 Half dead, though scarce incurious of the deeps,  
 Nor to adventure mostly disinclined,  
 Rows faster, lest the moon set, till he hears  
 His heart's betrothed, him wailing on the beach,  
 Some simple cottage maid ?

*Festus.* Far happier he.

*Helen.* I grant ye. But hadst thou no strange-world  
 toy ;

No faithful fire-drake, dogging every step ;  
 No spotted wyvern, giant pet, bat-winged ;  
 Lithe libbard, purring panther, cat of God,  
 Nor shoulder perching harpy ? Didst not find  
 One salamander fire-conceived, oft seen  
 Luxurious, nestling in the seven yeared flame ;  
 Emblem of him who mid the children three,  
 Thrown in the furnace, trode the coals serene ;  
 Nor milk white unicorn, not so rare, bestride,  
 Through greenwood ambled once by faerie power,  
 Predictive of the damsel of the sea ?

*Festus.* I can't remember these things, if I saw.

*Helen.* There may be savagery in other worlds,  
 If less than man's exterminative. For see,  
 How cruel, men ; not to themselves-wards less  
 Than lives below them ; lives God hath not thought  
 Unworthy him to make, we ought not deem  
 Unworthy of our care ; but though create  
 To serve or suffer, treat, as made by him  
 With high humanity. Yet in their death  
 Look how men wanton ! till the heart it grieves  
 Scarcely, when these, in blind revenge of blood  
 Causelessly shed, retaliate death for death ;  
 As when in icy seas the barb-gored whale  
 Drags his tormentors deathwards ; and though these  
 For life kill, others slay for play, as still  
 In Zetland, where betimes some ruthless wight,  
 Scaling the scaur, in sport the nests despoils  
 Of auk or gull ; they, crowding clamorous round,  
 Intruded on, insulted, injured, sore  
 His ears besiege, until with querulous wing,  
 One stern and ancient fowl assails his eyne ;  
 His hold gives way ; he topples headlong down,

From crag to crag rebounding, till the sea,  
 For many a ghastly loan responsible,  
 Seals up the expiring secret ; and, avenged,  
 God's feathered kind scream triumph. Him, at home,  
 Or dame, or mother, by her drowsy wheel,  
 Expects ; and through the ominous night, her ears  
 Sharpens to catch his customary step,  
 Whose ghost now flaunts the breakers ; or, far off,  
 Lamps the lone wold. I cannot brook to see  
 This needless, useless, senseless, slaughter strewn  
 Round earth as though death-torments were a boon  
 We owed it to our kingdom to impart,  
 Impartially, to all created life.

But how all minor cruelties of man  
 Are summed in war, conclusive of all crimes ;  
 When not defensive, indefensible !

*Festus.* Light of my heart ! thou say'st the veriest truth.  
 How is it Christian nations boast of war,  
 Practised to steep the earth in brother blood,  
 Deeper than heathen ? Shows not current time  
 Man's deadliest wit at work how most to slay ?  
 Scan earth, and mark the myriads massed in arms,  
 Scowling defiant hate ; burning to reave  
 Each other of domain, state, power ; or prove  
 Predominance of race ! What hosts arrayed  
 In battailous pomp meet, east and west, the eye !  
 Not those so vast, to immemorial age  
 Sacred, of Scythic birth, which, floodlike, surged  
 Far round the mount Armenian ; nor so wide,  
 Those once the crutchèd hermit's eyes beheld,  
 Uprist in bodily answer to his prayers,  
 By Danube's bank ; whence hardy knighthood's shield ;  
 Nor host immixed that, by Propontic wave,  
 Its ranks deployed by nations to salute  
 The golden-footed dame, who sheathed in steel  
 Her liliated breast, and couched her lance for love  
 Of Christ ; and with the hope of wresting back  
 From infidels his hallowed tomb, led on,  
 With jewelled rein, and morion snowy plumed,  
 Her maiden chivalry, and glittering queans,  
 Luckless ; for ah ! their virgin valour quailed,  
 Ere yet upon the spoil, the manlier might  
 Bounded of stern Islam ; nor, till unhorsed,  
 Unhelmed, knew these the delicate foe they had thrown,  
 Flower-breathed, as in the moon of blossoms earth.

*Student.* Nor that by sunny Tours, where fell the force  
 Moorish, beneath the Frankland monarch's mace,  
 Which Europe saved from turban and Koraun ;  
 Nor those above whose heads the flaming sword,  
 Two-handled, and two-edged with pest and fire,

Of militant angel, pierced the clouds, and slew,  
At one stroke, squadrons.

*Festus.* Still, from age to age,  
Prevails the universal lust of death  
And vulgar slaughter; war of all bad things  
Worst, and man's crowning crime, save when for faith  
Or freedom waged; but when for greed of ground,  
Or mere dominion, cursed of man and God.  
As when the clans Mogul—which late had left  
Their maze of mountains the high plains that bound—  
Whence Buzanghir and all his valorous brood,  
Heads of the golden horde, and sons of light,  
Whom Alancova to her sun-spouse bare  
At treble birth; the lords of throne and crown,  
Khaliph's, or king's, or Tzar's, which Zinghis gained,  
Or filial Kublai, with all-suasive sword,  
Bright ravisher of souls, into one realm  
Rounded and died; strict theists they who held  
In God and their own swords, a brief, brave creed,—  
O'er Europe's quaking heart careered, and like  
Sunblast on greensward, graved their fiery name  
In blazing towns and harvests blackening; woke,  
With tramp terrific of their horses' hoofs,  
The slumbering nations; to its stony foot  
Burned Breslaw, and at Wollstadt won a field  
Red with the gore of Christian chivalry,  
But fled from their own conquest; fled aghast;  
And perished in the wilds where they were born;  
And when in later times and distant lands,  
By countless wrongs indignant made, distraught,  
The Azteks for their lord, and woe-crowned head,  
Stern Moctezuma, archer of the heavens,—  
Beset by bigots, falsely named white gods,  
Their deeds of black fiends rather savouring,  
But, steel-clad cowards, strong in fulminant arms,  
Instalment thought of thunder at command,  
By the plume-mailed barbarians, gold who held  
The sun's bright tearlets—sought in vain to buy  
Humanity of Obistians, infidel these  
To earth's best faith, nor capable to preach,  
By bloodshed, creed pacific; or southward, where  
His quadripartite world the Ynga ruled;  
Earth's universal passion wasting not  
On king-faced coin, but hallowing every mote  
To beauty, or to deity, till came,  
Crowding, the guests profane, with priest and cross,  
Who slaughtering thousands of his flock, and him  
Incarcerating, bade pile his prison walls  
With the soul-soiling dross they hungered for,  
Ere he should know release, his sole release  
Death;—how humiliated must all men feel,

Dumb with unmeasurable guilt, to know  
That for these vicious ends the self-deemed good,  
Have all good illed ; and, in faith's peace-pledged name,  
Blasphemous, vaunted of the invader's crimes,  
And gloried in the havoc of his hand.

*Helen.* Yea, even Christians sometimes may do well ;  
As when by gay Châlons the Paynim Hun,  
His hosts arrayed, contemptuous of the faith  
Which nerved their arms who conquered, wrongly he  
Deeming in godless numbers victory lay ;  
Just cause had they to thank God, and to wave  
The sword of sacred triumph in his cause,  
One with the cause of freedom, faith, and life.

*Student.* But now with that thou spakest of, before  
This privileged interceptress of all speech  
Deflect as from a gem's face, thought's bright rays ;  
Go on, I pray. I came to be informed.  
Thou knowest my ambition, and I joy  
To feel thou feedest it with purest food.

*Festus.* Tell all I feel I cannot ; save myself,  
Seeming to know but little ; yet am not shamed  
To have studied mine own life, and know it like  
Tear-blistered letter, fruit and proof which holds  
Of feeling deeper than poor pen can score,  
Or the eye discover ; and that, oft, my heart's thoughts  
Will rise and shake my breast, as madmen shake  
The stanchions of their dungeons, and howl out.

*Helen.* But thou wast telling us of poesie,  
And the kind nature-hearted bards.

*Festus.* I was.  
I knew one well, a friend of mine : his mind,  
Taste, temper, habits, temperament and life ;  
Yet with heart kind as beats, he was, earthlike,  
No sooner made than marred, for ever. Young,  
He wrote amid the ruins of his heart ;  
They were his throne and theme—like some lone king,  
Who tells the story of the land he lost,  
And how he lost it.

*Student.* Tell us more of him.

*Helen.* Nay, but it saddens thee.

*Festus.* 'Tis like enough.

We slip away like shadows into shade ;  
We end, and make no mark we had begun ;  
We come to nothing, like a pure intent.  
When we have hoped, sought, striven, and lost our aim,  
Then the truth fronts us, beaming out of darkness,  
Like a white brow, through its overshadowing hair.

*Student.* Unkindly truth ; nay, be not so severe.  
One of us dies ; so end our claims, our plans.  
We choose our side, we take our ground, high strung,

Or meek ; most, hopeful ; deem life's game our own,  
To the third figure ; lo ! our bails drop down  
Plump, or clack skywards ; and it is we who have scored  
Nothing :—not even a bye. Truly, too true.

*Festus.* But I was speaking of my friend. He, quick,  
Generous, and simple, obstinate in end,  
High-hearted, was from his youth ; his spirit rose  
In many a glittering fold and gleamy crest,  
Hydra-like to its hindrance ; mastering all,  
Save one thing—love, and that out-hearted him.  
Nor did he think enough, till it was over,  
How bright a thing he was breaking, or he would  
Surely have shunned it, nor have let his life  
Be pulled to pieces, like a rose by a child.  
But passions cause remorse that make the heart,  
Musing the passed, writhe 'neath its ivory vault,  
And thin the blood by weeping at a night.  
If madness wrought the sin, the sin wrought madness,  
And made a round of ruin. It is sad  
To see the light of beauty wane away ;  
Know eyes are dimming, bosom shrivelling, feet  
Losing their spring, and limbs their lily roundness ;  
But it is worse to feel our heart-spring gone,  
To lose hope, care not for the coming thing,  
And feel all things go to decay with us,  
As 'twere our life's eleventh month : and yet  
All this he went through, young.

*Helen.* Poor soul ! I should  
Have loved him for his sorrows.

*Festus.* It is not love  
Brings sorrow, but love's objects.

*Student.* Then he loved.

*Festus.* I said so. I have seen him, when he hath had  
A letter from his lady dear, he blessed  
The paper that her hand had travelled over,  
And her eye looked on ; and would think he saw  
Gleams of that light she lavished from her eyes,  
Wandering amid the words of love there traced,  
Like glowworms among beds of flowers. He seemed  
To bear with being but because she loved him.  
She was the sheath wherein his soul had rest,  
As hath a sword from war : and he at night,  
Would solemnly and singularly curse  
Each minute he had not thought of her.

*Helen.* Now that  
Was truly like a lover ! and she loved  
Him, and him only.

*Festus.* Well, perhaps it was so.  
But he could not restrain his heart, but loved  
In that voluptuous purity of taste

Which dwells on beauty coldly, and yet kindly,  
As night-dew, whensoever he met with beauty.

*Helen.* It was a pity, that inconstancy—  
If she he loved were but as good and fair  
As he was worthy of.

*Festus.* Dark and bright there is,  
To everything but beauty such as thine,  
And that's all bright. If fault in him, 'twas one,  
Which made him do sweet wrongs. It mattered little.  
Or right or wrong, he were alike unhappy.  
Ah me! ah me! that there should be so much  
To call up love, so little to delight!  
'The best enjoyment is half disappointment  
To that we mean or would have in this world. Oft  
There are strange and sudden lights which startle youth,  
Prowing adventurously, life's seas, and seem  
To beacon it towards them; they are wreckers' lights;  
But he shunned these; and gathering, when she rose,  
Moon of his years, his true if perilous course,  
Though a sea of sorrow struck him, he yet held  
On; dashed all grief-ful from him as a bark  
Spray from her bow bounding: he lifted up  
His head, and the deep ate his shadow merely.

*Helen.* A poet not in love, is out at sea,  
Indeed; he must have a lay-figure, too.

*Festus.* I mean but to describe this friend of mine.

*Helen.* Describe the lady, too; she was, say, at once,  
Above all praise and all comparison.

*Festus.* Why, true. Her heart was all humanity,  
Her soul all God's; in spirit and in form,  
Like fair. Her cheek had the pale pearly pink  
Of sea-shells, the world's loveliest tint, as though  
She lived, one half might deem, on roses sopped  
In silver dew; she spake as with the voice  
Of spherul harmony, which greets the soul,  
When at the hour of death, the saved one knows  
His sister angels near; her eloquent eye  
Deposed, to him who loved, so sweet its hue,  
All other lights as grades of gloom; her dark,  
Long rolling locks were like a stream the slave  
Might search for gold, and searching, find. Her frown—

*Helen.* Nay, could she frown?

*Festus.* Ay, but a radiant frown,  
In common with the stars.

*Student.* Stars, fending now  
Business, now pleasure or alliance, men  
Malignant call, but so malign. Our stars,  
Permissive, or averse, are always kind.

*Helen.* Enough. I have her picture perfect. Cease.

*Student.* What were his griefs?

*Festus.* Who hath most of heart, knows most  
Of sorrow ; folly and sin and memory make  
A curse the future fires vie with in vain.  
The sorrows of the soul are graver still.

*Student.* Where and when did he study ? Mixed he  
much  
With the world, or was he, in his choice, recluse ?

*Festus.* He had no times of study, and no place ;  
All places and all times to him were one.  
His soul was like the wind-harp, which he loved,  
And sounded only when the spirit blew.  
Sometimes in feasts and follies, for he went,  
Life-like through all things ; and his thoughts then rose,  
Like sparkles in the bright wine, brighter still.  
Sometimes in dreams ; and then the shining words  
Would wake him in the dark before his face.  
All things talked thoughts to him. The sea went mad,  
And the wind whined as 'twere in pain, to show  
Each one his meaning ; and the awful sun  
Thundered his thoughts into him ; and at night,  
The stars would whisper theirs, the moon sigh hers.  
The spirit speaks all tongues and understands ;  
Both God's and angel's, man's and all dumb things,  
Down to an insect's inarticulate hum,  
And an inaudible organ. And speak it did  
The spirit, to him, of everything create ;  
And with the moony eyes like those we see,  
Thousands on thousands, crowding air in dreams,  
Looked into him its mighty meanings, till  
He felt the power fulfil him, as a cloud  
In every filament feels the forming wind.  
He spake the world's one tongue ; in earth and heaven  
There is but one, it is the word of truth.  
To him the eye let out its hidden meaning ;  
And young and old made their hearts over to him ;  
And thoughts were told to him, as unto none  
Save one who heareth said and unsaid, all.  
And his heart held these as a grate its gleeds,  
Where others warm them.

*Student.* I would I had known him.

*Festus.* All things to him were inspiration : wood,  
Wold, hill and field, sea, city, and solitude ;  
Crowds, streets, and man where'er he was ; and God's  
Blue eye, which is above us. Soundless sands,  
Stern cliff with sea-weed sandalled ; patient beach,  
Storm deprecating ; and still, deep, stately stream  
Travelling, instinctive, mainwards ; mead and plain ;  
Summer's warm soil and winter's cruel sky,  
As a sea eaglet's eye clear, icy blue,  
All things to him bare thoughts of minstrelsy.  
He drew his light from that he was midst, as a lamp

Matter of fire, from air, though it show not. His  
 Was but the power to light what might be lit.  
 A muse he met in every lovely maid ;  
 And learned a song from every lip he loved.  
 But his heart ripened most 'neath southern eyes,  
 Which sunned their sweets into him all day long :  
 For fortune called him southwards, towards the sun.

*Helen.* Did he love music ?

*Festus.* The only music he  
 Or learned or listened to, was from the lips  
 Of her he loved ; and then he learned by heart  
 Her words, delicious as the candied dew,  
 And durable, which gems the rose, on shores  
 Pacific, where the westering sun hath sown  
 The soil conceptive with the seed of gold ;  
 Albeit she would try to teach him tunes,  
 And put his fingers on the keys ; but he  
 Could only see her eyes, and hear her voice,  
 And feel her touch.

*Helen.* Why he was much like thee.

*Festus.* We had some points in common. When we  
 love,  
 All air breathes music, as though insucked through lips  
 Of lyre Æolian ; nature's every life  
 To ours responsive, like the branchy bower,  
 By Indian bards feigned, which, with ceaseless song,  
 Answers the sun's bright raylets ; nor till eve,  
 Folds her melodious leaves, and all night rests ;  
 Drinking deep draughts of silence.

*Student.* Was he proud ?

*Festus.* Lowliness is the base of every virtue :  
 Who goes the lowest builds, doubt not, the safest.  
 My God keeps all his pity for the proud.

*Student.* Was he world-wise ?

*Festus.* The only wonder is  
 He knew so much, leading the life he did.

*Student.* Yet it may seem less strange when we think  
 back,  
 How we, in the obscure chamber of the heart,  
 Sitting alone, see the world tabled to us ;  
 And the world wonders how recluses know  
 So much, and most of all how we know them.  
 It is they who paint themselves upon our hearts,  
 In their own lights and darkneses, not we ;  
 One stream of light is to us from above,  
 And that is that we see by, light of God.

*Festus.* We do not make our thoughts ; they grow in us  
 Like grain in wood : the growth is of the skies,  
 The skies, of nature ; nature of God. The world  
 Is full of glorious likenesses ; and these  
 'Tis the bard's task, beside his general scope

Of story, fancy framed, to assort, and make  
 From the common chords man's heart is strung withal,  
 Music; from dumb earth, heavenly harmony;  
 And for souls parched mid the world's wilds, to draw,  
 As from his altar's sacred hollows drew  
 Druid, his dews celestial, holy draught  
 Of life-thought clear, sweet, nutrient, as spring water,  
 Welling its way through flowers. As nature teems  
 With outward symbols fair or saintly, all,  
 Of our best thoughts,—though not till night we see  
 Heaven moveth, and a darkness thick with suns.  
 So faith with clearest proof the thoughts we think,  
 The eternal truths of science, and divine  
 Virtue subsist in God, as stars in heaven;  
 And as these specks of light great worlds will prove,  
 When we approach them sometime free from flesh,  
 So too our thoughts will become magnified  
 To mindlike things immortal. And as space  
 Seems but a property of God, wherein  
 All matter abides, so, other attributes  
 The infinite homes may be of mind and soul.  
 Rise from our souls thoughts, even as from the sea  
 The clouds sublimed in heaven. The cloud is cold,  
 Although ablaze with lightning—though it shine  
 At all points like a constellation; so  
 We live not to ourselves, our work is life;  
 In bright and ceaseless labour, as a star  
 To all worlds save itself, shines.

*Helen.* And thy friend,  
 And she he loved, happy were they together?

*Festus.* True love is ever tragic, grievous, grave.  
 Bards and their beauties are like double stars,  
 One in their bright effect.

*Helen.* Whose light is love.

*Student.* Or is it poesie thou meanest?

*Festus.* Both:

For love is poesie—it doth create;  
 From fading features, dim soul, doubtful heart,  
 And this world's wretched happiness, a life  
 Which is as near to heaven as are the stars.

*Helen.* Love's heart turns sometimes faint, like a sick  
 pearl.

He needs such delicate diet as the bird  
 Gold-breasted, which on cloudlets only morn  
 Hath ambered fed, ere rose-breath'd summer end  
 Dies, nor can brook the shadow of a decline.

*Festus.* They parted; and she named heaven's judg-  
 ment seat,  
 As their next place of meeting; and it was kept  
 By her, at least, so far that nowhere else  
 Could it be made until the day of doom.

*Helen.* So soon men's passion passes! yea it sinks  
 Like foam into the troubled wave which bore it.  
 Merciful God! let me entreat thy mercy!  
 I have seen all the woes of men—pain, death,  
 Remorse, and worldly ruin; they are little,  
 Weighed with the woe of woman when forsaken  
 By him she loved and trusted. Hear, too, thou!  
 Lady of heaven, maid-mother, thou in whom,  
 Betaking him into mortality,  
 As in thy son he took it into him,—  
 God from the temporal and eternal made  
 One soul-world same and ever, oh! for the sake  
 Of thine own womanhood, with divinity crowned,  
 Pray away aught of evil from her soul;  
 And take her out of anguish unto thee,  
 Always, as thou didst this one!

*Festus.* Who doth not  
 Believe that that he loveth cannot die?  
 There is no mote of death in thine eye's beams  
 To hint of dust, or darkness, or decay;  
 Eclipse upon eclipse, and death on death;  
 No! immortality sits mirrored there,  
 Like a fair face long looking on itself;  
 Yet shalt thou lie in death's angelic garb,  
 As in a dream of dress, my beautiful:  
 The worm shall trail across thine unsunned sweets,  
 And feast him on the heart men pined to death for;  
 Yea, have a happier knowledge of thy beauties  
 Than best-loved lover's dream e'er duped him with.

*Helen.* It is unkind to think of me in this wise;  
 Beside that I may die by sea, or fire,  
 Or gulped down quick by earthquakes, who can tell?  
 Surely the stars must feel that they are bright,  
 In beauty, number, nature, infinite;  
 And the strong sense we have of God in us,  
 Makes me believe my soul can never cease.  
 The temples perish, but the God still lives.

*Festus.* It is therefore that I love thee; for that when  
 The fiery perfection of the world,  
 The sun, shall be a shadow, and burnt out,  
 There is an impulse to eternity  
 Raised by this moment's love.

*Helen.* I pray it may!  
 Time is the crescent shape to bounded eye  
 Of what is ever perfect unto God.  
 The bosom heaves to heaven, and to the stars;  
 Our very hearts throb upwards, our eyes look;  
 Our aspirations always are divine.

*Festus.* Yet is it in distress of soul we see  
 Most of the God about us, as at night

Of nature's limitless vast ; for then the soul,  
 Seeking the infinite purity, most in prayer,  
 By the holy Spirit o'ershadowed, doth conceive  
 And in creative darkness, unsuspect  
 Of the wise world, ignorant of this, perfects  
 Its restitutive salvation ; with its source  
 Reconciliate and end ; its humanized  
 Divinity, say, of life. Think God, then, shows  
 His face no less toward us in spiritual gloom,  
 Than light.

*Helen.* But not all gloom felicity brings ;  
 And hers, I fear, brought somewhat less than bliss.  
 There is a love which acts to death, and through death,  
 And may come white, and bright, and clear like paper  
 From refuse, or from purest things at first :  
 It is beyond life's accidents. For things  
 We make no compt of, have in them the seeds  
 Of life, use, beauty, like the cores of fruit  
 We fling away.

*Student.* But of thy friend ; say more.  
 Perhaps much happiness in friendship made  
 Amends for his love's sorrows ?

*Festus.* Ask me not.

*Helen.* But loved he never after ? Came there none  
 To roll the stone from his sepulchral heart,  
 And sit in it, an angel ?

*Festus.* Ah, my life !  
 My more than life, mine immortality !  
 Both man and womankind belie their nature  
 When they are not kind ; and thy words are kind,  
 Loving, and beautiful like thyself ; thine eye  
 And thy tongue's tone, and all that speak thy soul  
 Are like it. There's a something in the shape  
 Of harps, as though they had primarily been made  
 By music, self-inamorated, that sought  
 Some form of utterance adequate to exhaust  
 Her passionate sense of perfectness ; so seems  
 Thine absolute beauty but the effect of soul,  
 Sublimed and sweetened by the virtuous love  
 Of others' excellencies ; thou, indeed, to me  
 Reminder of her loving'st sympathies.  
 And he of whom thou askest loved again.  
 Couldst thou have loved one unlike men, whose heart  
 Was wrinkled long before his brow ? who would  
 Have cursed himself if he had dared tempt God  
 To ratify his curse, in fire ; and yet  
 With whom to look on beauty was a need,  
 A thirst was, yea, a passion ?

*Helen.* Yes, I think  
 I could have loved him ; but no, not unless

He were like thee; unless he had been, been thee.  
 Tell me, what was it rendered him so wretched,  
 At heart?

*Festus.* I may not tell thee.

*Student.* But tell me,  
 How, and on what he wrote, this friend of thine?

*Festus.* Love, mirth, woe, pleasure, was in turn his  
 theme;

And the great good which beauty does the soul;  
 And the God-made necessity of things.  
 And like that noble knight in olden tale,  
 Who changed his armour's hue at each fresh charge,  
 By virtue of his lady-love's strange ring;  
 So that none knew him save his private page,  
 And she who cried, God save him, every time  
 He brake spears with the brave till he quelled all—  
 So he applied him to all themes that came;  
 Loving the most to breast the rapid deeps  
 Where others had been drowned; and heeding nought  
 Where danger might not fill the place of fame.  
 And 'mid the magic circle of those sounds,  
 His lyre rayed out, spell-bound himself he stood,  
 Like a stilled storm. It is no task for suns  
 To shine. He knew himself a bard ordained,  
 More than inspired, of God, inspirited:  
 Making himself like an electric rod  
 A lure for lightning feelings; and his words  
 Like things that fall in thunder, things the mind,  
 In a dark, hot, cloudful state, makes meteor ball-like,  
 To spirits then spoken with spirit tongue, prevailed;  
 Compelled by wizard word of truth, they came,  
 And rayed them round him from the ends of heaven.  
 For as be all bards, he was born of beauty,  
 And with a natural fitness to draw down  
 All tones and shades of beauty to his soul;  
 Even as the rainbow-tinted shell, which lies  
 Miles deep at bottom of the sea, hath all  
 Colours of skies, and flowers, and gems, and plumes;  
 And all by nature, which doth reproduce  
 Like loveliness in seeming opposites.  
 And nature loved him, for he was to her  
 Faithful and loyal, tending well the weal  
 Of every life, or blood, or sap, was hers.  
 To her grand soul, death needless, needless pain,  
 Is deadly sin. Him, therefore, in august  
 Silence she edified in deeper things  
 Than the world's babble robs of; speaking him  
 In that instinctive paradisal tongue,  
 Known now to nature, poet-priests, and God,  
 Who out of clouds, flowers, fountains, dreams, and stars,

Weave a commutual language ; and conveyed  
 Clear to his eyes her veiled blaze of light,  
 And led him by the hand, and made him trace,  
 'Neath time's disguising dust, the broad-based truth,  
 And iron impress, ineffaceable,  
 Of the eternal die. Divinerlike,  
 He ate the hearts of things ere yet he could  
 Prophecy of them ; or predict of worlds  
 By augury of angels ; or foresee  
 Life's round career accomplished in the skies.  
 As though his ear had been by serpents lipped,  
 He wist the world of life. Of every tribe  
 Of living things the key-spell he could speak,  
 And entered in its presence with the sign  
 Of perfect acceptation. He of all  
 Was free ; a branch from off the tree of light,  
 Heaven-planted midst the wood we all indwell.  
 There was a light in death itself to him,  
 And the to-come had a clear presence. Thus  
 Ofttimes, at eve, together, eyeing heaven,  
 Creating stars, we sat, and stretching forth  
 The eagle-headed sceptre of the soul,  
 Ruled them at ease enthroned ; with gifts of power  
 Widening the empyrean world on world.  
 And dropping down the fathom-line of thought  
 Into the future years, conceive what 'twere  
 To quit this world's necessitated deeps,  
 These strange librating bonds of birth and death ;  
 And sweep into the still, free, sphere on high,  
 On faith and truth, our undeveloped wings,  
 Like to a vital wind, invisible,  
 Yet firmed and bounded in a beauteous form ;  
 To give up life for being, and be gods :—  
 Such were the heights we aimed at, such the deeps  
 He reached and yet alive ; for, sooth to say,  
 His soul was twin-lifed with a certain star ;  
 When he died, the star also died.

*Helen.*

*Note that.*

*Student.* Now, I beseech thee, be not as a stream  
 Which publisheth its shallows, but keeps all  
 Its deep things to itself. What mean'st thou, say ?  
 That all things have a soul, an inner life,  
 I much believe, such things as trees and flowers,  
 Life not as ours like positive, less defined,  
 Still conscious, rivers, may be, mountains. stars :  
 That substance implies essence, essence life ;  
 That what to us mere matter shows, may show  
 As mentally to others ; and that men  
 Are shadows inwardly invert of gods ;  
 So, at the fiery martyrdom of earth

When all heaven's starry sisterhood shall sigh  
 The blazing pyre to see, our souls will rise  
 With its spheral spirit, and there in it for ever,  
 Abide, all life's forms blessed and beautified.

*Helen.* What if it were that life, commencing first  
 In kind atomic, step by step, through all  
 The countless grades vegetative, animal,  
 Of nature, should progress at last to man,  
 Possessed with all the intermediate powers  
 Of all the schooling spheres he had passed through, till  
 This mere noviciate of humanity,  
 Encumbered with the veil of flesh, expired ;  
 The spirit shall take the plenar vows of truth,  
 And enter upon the sanctity of heaven ?

*Festus.* Our life is like the wizard's charmed ring ;  
 Death's heads, and loathsome things fill up the ground,  
 But spirits wing about, and wait on us,  
 While yet the hour of enchantment is.  
 And while we keep within, we are safe, and can  
 Force them to do our bidding.

*Student.* It is very true.

*Helen.* Oh that mine eyes had virtues, such as those  
 Native to fairy fount in Sarnia's isle,  
 Rock-pinnacled by the foamy braid of the sea,  
 Of reach how perilous ; whereby, oft, of yore,  
 'Neath summer moons, danced elf-dom, and its wave  
 Fresh, sweet, so gifted, that man's eye inlaved  
 Thereafter knew sense spiritual, and view  
 Of bodiless things ; gift with the fairies now  
 Gone, possibly ; but if not, how little it were  
 To risk all, this once gained !

*Student.* Risk nothing, beauty ;  
 But know that always properly prepared  
 By holy meditation and divine lore,  
 Souls, self-adapted knowledge to receive  
 Are, by the truth desired illumined ; made  
 Fit to convene, converse with purer powers  
 Which do unseen surround us e'er, and gladden  
 In human good and exaltation ; oft,  
 The face of heaven is not more clear to one,  
 Than to another, outwardly ; but this,  
 By strong intention of his soul perceives,  
 Attracts, unites himself to essences,  
 And elemental spirits, of wider range,  
 And more beneficent nature ; by whose aid,  
 Occasion, circumstance, futurity,  
 Impress on him their image, and impart  
 Their secrets to his soul ; thus chance and lot  
 Are sacred things ; thus dreams are verities.  
 The soul too, which, like mountain lakelet lifts

Its gaze to heaven alone, will, doubt not, learn  
 Glassed in its visionary profound, to read  
 Ere long, futurity's cloudy forms; or mark  
 Clear through time's crystalline egg, the chanceful play  
 Of spirits, and strange forecomingness of things.  
 Saidst not this friend of thine was even a bard  
 And wrote prophetic of time's afterworld?

*Festus.* Ay, and time's present.

*Student.*

What of that he wrote?

*Festus.* Some said, and lied, that he blasphemed, because  
 God's name he used, as spirits use it, barely;  
 Yet surely more sublime in nakedness  
 Statuelike, than in a whole tongue of dress.  
 Thou knowest, God! that to the full of worship  
 All things are worshipful; and thy great name,  
 In all its awful brevity, hath nought  
 Unholy breeding in it, but doth bless  
 Rather the tongue that utters it; for me,  
 I ask no higher office than to fling  
 My spirit at thy feet, and cry thy name,  
 God! through eternity. Who irreverence sees  
 In that name hath been wont to take it in vain.  
 Call all things by their names; hell call thou hell;  
 Archangel call archangel; and God, God.  
 Not less, for those who wilfully mislead,  
 Or err, the word is, lied; though it were writ  
 In honied dew, upon a lily leaf,  
 With quill of nightingale, like love-letters  
 From Oberon sent to the bright Titania,  
 Fairest of all the fays.

*Helen.*

Not such were all?

*Festus.* No. Unlike those false brethren who of old  
 Sold their enlightener, and into duress cast  
 The unfolders of high secrets, far and near,  
 All generous souls rejoiced in his, as one  
 Which holding in itself the sacred power  
 Thought to eternize, things divine achieves  
 With infinite ease; an earnest thus to all  
 Of gifts to come; as when young Jove, who now  
 Had but dethroned his sire, nor lots yet cast  
 With his titanic kin for the world's sway;  
 In earth's first blaze of conquest Maia met,  
 From out whose hallowed bosom lacteal life  
 He erst had drawn; she, bending close to his,  
 Her sad, but luminous brow, with thought oppressed  
 Of favour and dominion, him besought  
 What sometime he would grant her for long love,  
 And bounteousness of both her mothering breasts;  
 He, poor in all but in immortality;  
 Earth was not his as yet, but only heaven;

Touched her with hand deific, and her form,  
 Flashing with light, flew upwards as a star,  
 Insphered in air for ever. There she shines ;  
 Not envious of the power, her earthly veins  
 Which filled with astral life ; but laudful, blessed.  
 So too the high and bright souled sons of men  
 Loved him and praised. Yet praise nor fame he loved.  
 Men's praise an awe of one's own self so breeds  
 In us, we fear lest the heart, magician-like,  
 Show more than we can bear. The clouds which hide  
 The mental mountains rising nighest heaven,  
 Are full of finest lightning, and a breath  
 Can give those gathered shadows fearful life,  
 And launch their light in thunder o'er the world.  
 Yet was not all perfection, even finite ;  
 But that at first defective most, he wholed,  
 By tyrant will, and toilful skill, use-born ;  
 As the young merlin, when he first takes flight,  
 The uncredited wing whirrs aimless ; this side, now,  
 Stoops dubiously, now that : his ways, his bourne,  
 Wists not, nor potencies ; till, timely taught  
 By faulteous circlet and shrewd fall, just scope,  
 Firm trust in the unvacuous air, life's field  
 Henceforth to be, full-yearled, his total skies  
 Measuring in glance immense, with sternest plume  
 Strained steadily through one pauseless, pulseless flight,  
 He rounds ; or, augur-like, from end to end,  
 Pages the parted firmament. So with him  
 Contemplative of work at last matured,  
 His eye's dark ball grew greater with delight,  
 And darker, as he viewed the things he had made ;  
 Not planless, aimless not ; deep based, high reared ;  
 Not men nor monsters only outside the fane  
 Grinning and howling ; but a holy group  
 Shown shrined within, before seraphic forms,  
 Embodied thoughts of worship, wisdom, love,  
 Joining their fire-tipped wings across the shrine  
 Where his heart's relics lay, and where were wrought  
 Upon men's minds immortal miracles.

*Student.* Poems outline religions, nay than some  
 Better they are, and lovelier far than most.  
 The poet's pen, the true divining rod  
 Trembling towards feeling's inner founts, brings forth  
 To light, to use, the sources many and sweet  
 We have, of beauty and good in our own deep bosoms.  
 But what if it be true that all is God ;  
 Worship, the passive sympathy of parts  
 Atomic with the mightier, active mass,  
 As might a foam drop worship the great sea

All deities mere abstractions of man's mind,  
 And ultimate moral laws impersonate?  
 I hold my revelation in myself,  
 Of the God within me, sacred and supreme.  
 And for the law moral, humane, believe  
 He truest is of men whose thoughts are highest,  
 Whose wishes noblest, purest, charitablest;  
 Whose acts embody most both wish and thought.  
 Ill deeds who doth, in such incarnates hell,  
 By his own will. In our own brain or heart,  
 The magic circle lies wherein we raise  
 Sprites, good or bad. With our own blood, it is,  
 We pour libation to forbidden powers;  
 Or satisfy with expurgative fires,  
 Fed from the fuel of unbounded grief,  
 The offended God within us. Life's great laws,  
 The world is based upon, inviolable,  
 By us, and to us holy, he who makes  
 Breaks never. This my creed, I hold he most  
 Believes, who only God believes; all else  
 Is superstition.

*Festus.* More than this is true,  
 And more is needed. Freedom not alone  
 Is worthy of worship; souls most one with heaven  
 Less, maybe, glory in liberties than laws.

*Student.* Man's mind is like the moon, whose crescent  
 orb  
 Tops yonder hill; the vastier volume dark;  
 But 'tis not that which grows; the virginal light  
 At first but just enough to affirm its life,  
 With total and resistless ray, at last  
 Subdues the obscure sphere; so reason wins  
 From faith her shadowy world; and knowledge hoards  
 What ignorant belief hath lost for aye.  
 Relate his purpose summarily.

*Festus.* Why thus.

*Helen.* I have been quite waiting for an eloquent pause  
 In my instructors' speeches; gained at last.  
 So now then, I shall ask myself to sing,  
 And granting I agree to my request,  
 I think you ought to thank me.

*Student.* But not now!

*Helen.* Oh, yes, this instant.

*Festus.* Aught thou lik'st of love.

*Student.* Something about love; and it can't be wrong;  
 For love the sunny world supplies  
 With laughing lips and happy eyes.

*Festus.* And 'twill be sooner over.

*Student.* And so better.

*Helen.* Like an island in a river,  
 Art thou my love to me ;  
 And I journey by thee ever,  
 With a gentle ecstasie.  
 I arise to fall before thee ;  
 I come to kiss thy feet ;  
 To adorn thee and adore thee,  
 Mine only one, my sweet !

And thy love hath power upon me,  
 Like a dream upon a brain ;  
 For the loveliness which won me,  
 With the love, too, doth remain :  
 And my life it beautifieth,  
 Though love be but a shade,  
 Known of only, ere it dieth,  
 By the darkness it hath made.

A most lugubrious end ; I hope that song,  
 Tis thine, was not addressed to me.

*Student.*

*Resume.*

'The king who ruled the demons, ruled the powers  
 Of air, ruled angels, was by woman ruled.

*Festus.* All great lays, equals to the minds of men,  
 With the divine deal ; have for end some good  
 Commensurate of the soul, some scheme of being  
 To illustrate ; this, God's great world-drame to sum,  
 Prophetically. Mind, this world's, and soul, God's  
 The wise man here joins, orderly, all he can.  
 Mid lesser lays stand, as among village cots  
 Churches, these works high, holy, whose sanctity  
 Crowns them as gold cross minster dome, and shows,  
 As with that instonement of divinity,  
 The whole belongs to God. Joy 'tis to know  
 However state, or soul, in creed might err,  
 Mind's greatest works done e'er to God, as hand's ;  
 So, hallowed shown, to him, man's loftiest thought,  
 And might's sublime humility. One bard  
 Shows God as he deals with kings and states, war-ruled ;  
 One as inaugurating an empire's sway ;  
 As with the first man this ; this, as with heaven,  
 Earth, hell, and fires remedial ; ours, one soul  
 Forechosen, man's ultimate, with whom all time,  
 Earth's universal race and life sphere end ;  
 One soul, one statued mind, one naked heart,  
 Emblemed ; creative and created mind  
 Shown allwhere interactive ; this though yielding  
 In mediate trials, triumphing o'er the last  
 Temptation, testful ; being, at one with God.  
 All points are central to the infinite.  
 Therefore it is that deity, which fills  
 The spheres unnumbered save by him who made  
 The space existent whole, one human heart,

With equal power and specialty inspires.  
His aim being spiritual most, the bard would tell  
How the soul stands with God, and the unseen  
Realities round us all ; our angel kin,  
And spheres of heavenly life ; the mind-made world,  
Without, within ; part, earthly ; other bards  
Man dressed in manners, customs, forms, and laws,  
Time, place, appearance, countless accidents  
Of peace or polity draw ; to him these are not ;  
'Twas his to show, whate'er his doubts, sins, trials,  
However earth-born pleasures soil man's soul ;  
What power soe'er he gain of evil, still,  
That not alone till death time is, but heaven  
Stands open day and night to spirit and man,  
Ever ; for all are of God's race, and have  
In themselves good. The life-writ of a heart,  
Whose firmest prop and highest intent, the hope  
Proffered of serving God as poet-priest ;  
And the belief that he would not put back  
Love-offerings, though brought to him by hands  
Unclean and earthy even as fallen man's  
Must be ; and most the thankful manifest  
Of his high power and goodness, in redeeming  
And blessing souls that love him, spite of sin,  
And their old worldly strain, these are the aims,  
The doctrines, truths, and staple of the story.  
What theme sublimer than all soul being saved ?  
Though it is not moral standards most, the bard  
Is called to inculcate, such designs pertain  
To other ministries, the law of life  
His all-comprising province, yet he errs,  
Who, faithful maybe to his higher end,  
Unites not both in one symmetric plan,  
Lofty and plain and pure as are the skies ;  
All forms resolving to one element.  
Our world-man's life,—the model of all men, he  
All in his fate involving, friends, loves, foes,  
As draws the sun his children, circling round  
Heaven's infinite, to his own eternal end,—  
Being moralled wholewise, thus, and even in parts,  
Which, though to careless eyes, like the winged stones,  
Air-travelled, now on Saronian downs, convolved,  
And in primæval mystery, still to eye  
Trained worshipfully reveal a holy use,  
And meaning of a temple reared to God ;  
While in all life's scenes and sections that is found  
Which aiding thought of him, him whom the more  
We obey and love, the nigher to are we drawn,  
As by attraction spiritual, and growth  
Of divine gravity, whereby the soul,

Though on things' outmost verge, elects to seek  
 Its central reason of being, all-where diffused,  
 Shows all that's good is deathless, as of God.  
 For the world tells us manifestly of him,  
 As of my soul, flesh ; so our imperfectness  
 Proves his perfection ; our atomic life,  
 His orbèd totality of being. This told  
 For man's behoof in these and ultimate times,  
 The bard with eye foreviewing gifted, shows  
 Instructive, how God reconciles to himself  
 All being.

*Student.* By purifying from ill all worlds ?  
 I would not ask thy meaning, but that I know  
 Thy even lighter words have in them couched  
 Not rarely a double value ; and much convince  
 Of secret sanctity, like a golden toy  
 Mid beauty's orbèd bosom ; speak thy thought.

*Festus.* Too oft have holiest bards defiant Ill  
 Successful shown 'gainst God. Ours, truelier taught  
 Holds not the Omnipotent self-doomed to succumb  
 'Neath evil and imperfection, sin, woe ; serfs  
 By him so made for ends sealed in their birth.  
 But, as when artist, skilled in feats of fire,  
 The mother-city of an empire shows  
 How, though heart-sick for slaughtered sons, she still,  
 May gladden her in the peace their swords have wrought :—  
 The mimic comet at his signal soars  
 To invade the upper sphere ; and streams of fire  
 Blood-dyed, shot east and west, speak war, until  
 Tumultuous founts of flame, erewhile immasked,  
 Flare triumph to the stars ; then, with weird art,  
 He bids the skies shed showers of golden rain,  
 Of wealth pacific proof, or sheaves of light  
 Drop their bright grain ; token that while the rich  
 Reap, e'en the poor may glean life's goods ; or, roots,  
 Instant in air, a palm whose glittering cones  
 Seem culled by hand celestial, fruits of peace,  
 As peace of victory ; street, spire and dome,  
 With fire-jets gleam, in lines of lengthening light,  
 Vibrant, by playful gusts chased ; soothed in soul,  
 The night-thronged nations thunder their applause.  
 So he, heaven's war divine 'gainst falsest hell ;  
 God's conquest o'er Ill's ravenous hosts ; and grace,  
 And peace triumphant celebrates for man,  
 Now deathless, qualified for heaven by good.

*Student.* And all begins and ends, thou sayest in  
 heaven ?

*Helen.* So gracious the bard's plan.

*Festus.* Yes, even as one  
 Who sacring first his touch with waters blessed,

Some stateliest minster entered, breast and brow  
 Glistening with holy dew, from aisle to aisle,  
 Here, overshot with rafters sunbeams, there  
 With gorgeous lights begloomed, strays reverent; all  
 Its spatial vastness, all its wonders notes;  
 Arches of aspiration and command;  
 Columns and carvèd curves which end, but seem  
 While ending blending with infinitude;  
 Shrines and miraculous treasures, relics heired  
 From tutelar saints, ascended now; views wrought  
 Immarinate on the wall the angelic poise  
 Of souls, earth's last assize; or, floorwise traced,  
 Boundless, indevious as a law of God,  
 Her long degree of light, her beam in heaven,  
 Mid sistering spheres itinerant; knees the slab  
 Luminous with gold aërial and all dyes  
 Oriel or rose transfuse in jewelled squares,  
 And gems gigantic as of paradise,  
 Imaginary, immortal; nether crypt  
 Spectral, shrinks not to unnight; nor risen, abhors  
 On prayerful knee, to scale sin-loosening stair  
 Thrice sacred; or with penitent foot o'erpace,  
 Bequest of sterner faith, its mystic maze,  
 A knotted league in length; but, led, at last,  
 By many a winding step to the roof high spired,  
 Glimpses with thanks, the skies, and air unvalled,  
 Unincensed air, breathes gladliest; so, man's soul  
 Time-travelled, all its hallowed wanderings o'er,  
 In the infinite presence ends of deity,—  
 The bard shows.

*Student.* Heaven's the birth of spirit; the world  
 Passing, preparative only in its kind.  
 We are but here the multiples of men,  
 Like seeds of thought and transient words of chance  
 Which, buried in the mind for days and nights,  
 Live to revive, and fructify in dreams  
 Of infinite power and import, the round world  
 We act in, shall itself but barely seem  
 To the soul a faltering reminiscence; seem  
 Like a base thought across a cloudless prayer,  
 Which ruffles it, not annuls; and lo! the great  
 Artist, whose pictures live, expunges earth,  
 And on his easel there dawns another heaven.

*Helen.* These things to think of, life nobilitates.

*Festus.* The sun, we may affirm, is dead and gone  
 For ever, and may swear he will rise no more;  
 The skies may put on mourning for their god,  
 And earth heap ashes on her head; but who  
 Shall keep the sun back, when he thinks to rise?  
 Where is the chain shall bind him, where the cell

Shall hold him? Hell he would burn down to embers;  
 And would lift up the world with a lever of light,  
 Out of his way; yet know ye 'twere thrice less  
 To do thrice this, than keep the soul from God.  
 O'er earth and cloud and sky and star and heaven,  
 With God it 'bides, uprisen as is a prayer.  
 O'erwearied with life's feints, and vain pursuits,  
 As some dim starlet, lost in maze of strange  
 Systems, retreats to heaven's securer depths,  
 Where luminary create hath never beamed,  
 So, indigent only of pure rest, the soul  
 Seals and secretes itself in deity.

*Helen.*

Hush!

Now lest we talk of nothing else all night,  
 I'll to my music. Sweet one, yes, I come.  
 Art thou not glad to see me? What a time  
 Since I have touched thine eloquent fingers, white  
 As eminent ripples upon an elfin sea  
 Of sound. Hast thou forgot me? mind! know'st not  
 My greeting? Ah! I love thee. Talk, you two,  
 Never heed me. I shall not you.

*Student.*

Agreed!

*Helen.* By the sweet muse of music, I could swear  
 I do believe it smiles upon me. See it,  
 Full of unuttered melodies, like a bird,  
 Articulative of sweetest notes that seem  
 From each other separated as drops of dew  
 Concentual; beating time with artless wing  
 Strained heavenward, now,—now, slowly, groundwards  
 sloped:  
 Rich in invisible treasures, like a bud  
 Of unborn sweets, and thick about the heart  
 With ripe and rosy beauty, full to trembling.  
 I love it like a sister. Hark! its tones;  
 They melt the soul within one, like a sword  
 Albeit sheathed, by lightning. Talk to me,  
 Lovely one; answer me thou beauty.

*Student.*

Hear her!

*Helen.* What said ye, sing again? Your kindness  
 well

Merits the raptures you are doomed to enjoy.

The rose is weeping for her love,  
 The nightingale;  
 And he is flying fast above,  
 To her he will not fail.  
 Already golden eve appears;  
 He wings his way along;  
 Ah! look, he comes to kiss her tears,  
 And soothe her with his song.

The moon in pearly light may steep  
 The still blue air ;  
 The rose hath ceased to droop and weep,  
 For lo ! her love is there.  
 He sings to her, and o'er the trees  
 She hears his sweet notes swim ;  
 The world may weary ; she but sees  
 Her love, and hears but him.

*Festus.* So to the flower of perfect life the world,  
 Sings the eternal spirit ; drinks its divine  
 Perfume, and comforts it with fluttering wings.

*Student.* That roses weep is a botanic fact ;  
 A zoologic truth that birds woo flowers.

*Helen.* 'Tween truth and fact, a world-wide difference  
 lies ;

Earth is a fact, but heaven, oh heaven, is truth :  
 That word reminds me I have news for thee,  
 Sir Student. Thou art invited to partake  
 With us truth's mysteries.

*Festus.* The friend thou knowest,  
 Whom thou hast met with me aforetime, now,  
 Knowing thine ardent longing for the light  
 Of wisdom, and my sovereign beauty's, here  
 Hath tendered to procure us without pain  
 Probational, for proofs are only due  
 From spirits less far advanced, the privilege  
 Of ancient mysteries, practised heretofore,  
 Which likely linked together divers faiths.

*Helen.* Wilt share with us this glory ?

*Student.* Gladly, I.  
 The more so as concerned with rites, thou knowst,  
 Less diverse in their origin, than the end  
 We have laboured to extend 'mong men, and mean  
 By earth enlightening inwardly to achieve.  
 Art thou initiate ?

*Helen.* Art thou perfect ?

*Student.* Scarce  
 An answer, that, fair lady of the light.

*Festus.* Nay, then. To one wise, chosen, say, soul re-  
 stored,  
 What rite, or rule, prerequisite can be ?  
 Soul that hath once received, as some receive,  
 With fatal knowledge of futurity,  
 Faith full assured, that from time's crowned womb  
 Whatever comes is kingly, feels henceforth  
 All secondary knowledge pall. To me  
 Rule, rite sign, symbol, all have ceased to fruit.  
 Who knows the eternal secrets of the stars  
 Hath touched the quick of all faiths ; knoweth all  
 Worth knowing ; though true faith all known transcends.  
 And whoso lives not as the Master lived,

The great initiate here of life divine,  
 In the dry wilderness of self-denial  
 Beset, it may be, by wild passions, sins  
 Brute-like; by demons in the form of fame,  
 Power, beauty tempted, worship, wealth; in sooth  
 By aught that might the truth-fraught soul deflect,  
 In its serene procession towards God's throne,  
 To aims base, selfish; and who, trampling these,  
 Feels not God's sanction, nor the conscious worth  
 Of one long ministered to by angel hopes,  
 Winged with the spirit of comfort from high heaven,  
 Filling the craving mind with food celestial;  
 Greater or less than saint and spirit elect,  
 Hath most or nought of perfect manhood, tried  
 In God's all-cleansing fires. If nought, and he  
 Fails, falls he into fatal dark, the pit  
 Lit only by the light of serpents' eyes;  
 There, wandering desolately and self-condemned,  
 Till renovative times bid hope return.  
 But who so satisfied conquereth self, how blessed!  
 All that he once subdued who now enjoys.  
 Proud of his aid, but humble in himself,  
 Lion of God, he all attacks o'ercomes  
 Of fascinate fraud, or fiercest force;  
 A proffered throne to steal aside his soul  
 Into by paths of treachery, and bewray  
 The secret truth, supremely sweet, he spurns,  
 Whose crown is God, the perfecter of soul.  
 All souls are born of God and of the faith—  
 Their mother faith wherein they are bred and nursed.  
 The king hath many a hundred handmaidens,  
 All sharers in his worship, of his love.  
 Others may thirst to know more. I all know  
 I wish to know. Who, pray, can teach me truths  
 More sure, choice, comforting than those are mine  
 Of graduated divinity; being's grand  
 Development upwards; and the world's humane  
 And everlasting judgment of itself,  
 As worthier God than nought; though earth-fouled, man,  
 Like some degraded god, debarred the mount  
 For a time by oath of Stygian waters, oath  
 Void since by wave and god both gone, he, sole  
 Survivor, exile of eternity, met  
 With heaven's all-pardoning welcome, met, at last.

*Helen.* Ohill not our souls with negatives.

*Student.*

Say, I come.

'Tis to be hoped, like man-gods, we'll survive.

*Festus.* The spirit speaks of God in heaven's own tongue,  
 No mystery to those who love, but learned,  
 As is our mother-tongue from him, the parent,

By whom first fashioned, flesh and spirit, all forms  
 Of truth, and feelings of all kinds of beauty,—  
 Moral and natural, in our heart-clay stamped,  
 Burn with celestial pattern. It is in love,—  
 Earth midway spher'd 'tween love and war, war's part  
 In poesie played, our bard hath most his work  
 Love's heart-book made, and made well nigh all grief;  
 For the heart its truest likeness leaves in love's  
 O'erwhelming sorrow, which burns up and buries,  
 Like to the eloquent impress left, nor lost,  
 In ashes, of Pompeian maiden's bosom :  
 With love divine such blent. Though thin, though fleet  
 Our thoughts of God as ghosts, our thoughts of men  
 As men, bold, yet the ideals personate,  
 The shadowy creatures youth dreams live in the world  
 Embodied, but invisible, save in mind's,  
 The mightier, lack not ; names believed, beloved,  
 Of beauteous souls all saved, which stand, perchance,  
 Who knows ? for the heart's desires made pure in heaven.

*Student.* How is't the world so falls below our hopes ?

*Helen.* The world ! 'tis a forged thing, and hath not got  
 God's die upon it ; 'twill not pass in heaven.

*Student.* I might believe thee and remain still proof  
 Against all soothsayers.

*Festus.* Pray now, cease. Ye twain  
 Jar ever ; even, as with two bickering swords,  
 Concurrence makes not harmony.

*Student.* Nay, I yield.

*Helen.* Oh I could stand and rend myself with rage  
 To think I am so weak, that all are so.  
 Mere minims in the music made from us,  
 While I would be a hand, to sweep from end  
 To end, from infinite even to infinite,  
 The world's great chord. The beautiful of old  
 Had but to show some god had been with them,  
 And their worst fault to their best deed was hallowed.  
 That was to live. Could we uproot the passed,  
 Which grows and throws o'er us its chilling shade,  
 Lengthening each hour, and darkening ; or could we  
 Plant where we would the future, and make flourish,  
 'Twere to live, too. Enough, it seems, the present,  
 All weighed, to endure. The city of the passed  
 Is in ruins laid ; its echo echoing walls  
 At a whisper, fall : the coming's not yet built,  
 Nor laid even its foundations ; rather seems it,  
 Like the air-city, goodly and well-watered,  
 The dry wind dreams of on the sand, and dies  
 Wandering round it, and maundering ; we, our homes  
 Imaginary, cool courted, with alcoves  
 And fountains dropping in the noonlight, there

Waiting us, madly eye, and rave, and perish ;  
Not seeing the desert present is our end.

*Festus.* End darkest have the brightest natures oft.

*Student.* Let us not speak so ominously ; but while  
We live, work out our natures. We can do  
No wrong in them ; they are divine, eterne.  
I follow mine attraction, and obey  
Nature as earth does, circling round her source  
Of life and light, and keeping true in heaven  
Her path, if perfect not in round. What is ?

*Festus.* True ; no prognostics, or we close our night  
Too sadly, and go sleep, and dream of deaths.

*Student.* Dreams are mind-clouds, thought-forms, un-  
shapen and high,  
Or but God-shaped, like mountains, which contain  
Much and rich matter, oft-times not for us  
But others' conscience, dreams being rudiments  
Of the great state to come.

*Helen.* But what's a dream  
Of death ? Is that all ? Well, I too have had,  
What all methinks have once at least, in life—  
A vision of the region of the dead ;  
It was the land of shadows : yea, the land  
Itself was but a shadow ; and the race  
Which seemed therein were voices, thoughts of forms,  
And echoes of themselves. And there was nought  
Of substance seemed, save one thing in the midst,  
A great red sepulchre—a granite grave ;  
And at the bottom lay a skeleton,  
From whose decaying jaws the shades were born ;  
Making its only sign of life, its dying  
Continually. Some were bright, some dark.  
Those that were bright went upwards, heavenly.  
They which were dark grew darker, and remained.  
A land of change, yet did the half things nothing  
That I could see ; but passèd stilly on,  
Taking no note of other, mate or child ;  
For all had lost their love when they put off  
The beauty of the body. And as I  
Looked, I began to dream it was a dream ;  
The grave before me presently backed away,  
And I rushed after it : when the earth quaked twice ;  
Opened and shut, like the eye of one, convulsed,  
Then shut to with a shout. The grave was gone.  
And in the stead there stood a gleed-like throne,  
The ghostlings shook to see, and swooned ; for there,  
Strange shapes were standing, loaded with long chains,  
The links whereof were fire, waiting the word  
To bind and cast the shadows into hell ;  
For Death the second sat upon that throne,

Which set on fire the air not to be breathed.  
And as he lifted up his arm to speak,  
Fear preyed upon all souls, like fire on paper ;  
And mine among the rest, and I awoke.

*Student.* By Hades 'twas most awful. But I too  
Have dreamed strange things beyond the mind's clear grasp,  
Beyond life's limits and the term of time,  
And star-lamped palace of eternal night.  
I dreamed time's system ended, like a day  
Of celebrant victory rounded with a roar  
Of jubilant thunder, which subsides at last  
Into emphatic silence ; and the soul  
Which had outlived the great creative week,—  
Those seven fair days the Pleiades of time,  
Whereof if one be lost, 'tis lost in heaven,—  
Was rising from the ashes of the sun,  
Assured of its divineness, to enjoy  
Birth upon birth of glory and delight ;  
When lo !—a skiff upon a sea of fire,  
Wearily ploughing, crossed my vision's disk ;  
And straight it changed for ever and was nought.  
And as I gazed upon the lucid void,  
All things reframed themselves before mine eyes ;  
And looking up aloft I heard in heaven  
Young fluent Time discoursing of the worlds,  
With starry diagrams on night's black board,  
Most learnedly to many a lovely Hour,  
Who fain would have delayed to hear him out ;  
While wise Eternity sat by and smiled,  
Waving them all away.

*Festus.* And Time though now  
Old, withered, bald, still prates of them as I  
Have heard him, his young Hours, his lilied loves ;  
And still his mighty mother, in serene  
Maturity of beauty, sits and smiles ;  
The infant dotard's inexperienced age  
Sublimely pitying ; for well she knows,  
Though time and life are both of dual kind,  
And men and things now sacred and profane,  
Yet in the coming all shall holy be ;  
And the calm world reflect the One divine.  
Peace is the end of all things, tearless Peace ;  
Who by the immoveable basis of God's throne,  
Takes her perpetual stand ; and, of herself  
Prophetic, lengthens age by age her sceptre.  
The world, like a lion disembruted, rid  
With rose-wreathed reins, by a childling in some isle  
Enchanted, shall be subject yet to love,  
Earth's lord transforming all, he, unsuspect.

*Student.* I shall be swift to read.

*Festus.*

Yes read and learn

A hearty thanksgiving for blessings here ;  
 The proud prediction proved of life, to come ;  
 Love, holiness, future bliss unlimited ; learn  
 To view in nature deity all diffused.  
 Her study ; and with earth's purest elements  
 Mingle thy being ; sworn suitor for the smile  
 She pays all love with ; nor, until thine eye,  
 Hallowed by sympathy with her in all shapes  
 Fleeting or fixed, and every changeful mood,  
 Conceive her spiritually, believe thou aught  
 Knowest, or canst ; this conscious of, with heart  
 Loyal and reverent to the inmost soul,  
 And onemost cause of things, live blessed. For this,  
 The world hath said its say, for and against ;  
 And after praise and blame cometh the truth.

*Student.* And of all truth, the most we prize we learn  
 From poesie, faculty inborn, except  
 From God derived not.

*Festus.*

This condition add :

That as lauds attract the largesses of heaven,  
 As gifts God's bounties, purity his saints ;  
 So genius inspiration ; who most fame  
 To toil owes, his twin-brother. Even as when  
 In planning some steel-rutted road, long years  
 Dreamed of,—where now the fire-horse ramps, steam-  
 breath'd,  
 Sweating red coal-drops on his panting path,—  
 The deep-eyed engineer his level lays  
 Inscrutable, and anon, the hills with men,  
 Brood of his brain swarm ; black, unbottomed moss,  
 And willowy dale with mattock gleam and axe ;  
 Or rock-hills, cleft as with a giant's club,  
 Groan loud ; but stealthily, and reach on reach,  
 The mighty work, elongating itself,  
 Glides dragon-like, nor,—save in litheliest curves,  
 Flexed, gracile, as the lines meridian heaven  
 Hath clustered polewards,—swerves ; till o'er the sea,  
 Victor by hill and chasm, broad stream and plain,  
 Cloud-plumed its iron-brow towers high, at last  
 With head works of all nations ranked ; so here,  
 His primal plan for others' weal, our bard,  
 Made wise by grief's infallible instinct, knew  
 Must grow in gradual grandeur, till by toil  
 Inevitable of art complete, man's calm  
 Approof it conquer ; and by conquering serve.  
 'Tis the soul's love-service manwards, and toward God,  
 Which hath alone his inbreath, and is rendered  
 To him from those he worthy makes to worship ;  
 Who kneel at once to him, and at no shrine,  
 Save in the world's wide ear, do they confess them

Of faults all truths, through which, as the world follows,  
 He heareth and absolveth ; for the bard  
 Speaks but what all feel variously within  
 The heart's heart ; and the sin confessed, absolved,  
 Is done with, and for ever. Bards, to God,  
 The almighty poet of the world, confess ;  
 And they to whom it is given with holy things  
 To deal thus and such privilege high partake,  
 Life individual with life's lord enjoy,  
 Uplifted o'er the vast and markless mass ;  
 Yet not into a sphere of selfish thought,  
 But of innate and infinite commune  
 With all creation ; for, as distance rules,  
 Behold the stars are suns, the sun a star ;  
 So they who near God, boundless hold his love ;  
 Who far off lie, misdoubt it almost nought.  
 And I who hold the clear and flawless faith,  
 Ancient and universal in the spheres,  
 Know earth was ta'en out of heaven's starry side,  
 And both blessed. Therefore am I joyful, here,  
 In the far to be our heirdom glitters.

*Student.* Say,  
 Thy friend, was he much seen of the world ?

*Festus.* No, truly.  
 Too oft men look on all who live askance.  
 Were he a cold grey ghost, he might have honour.  
 Nor thought he of himself save as a ghost,  
 Who sees in night his day. For the true bard,  
 And genius those most haunts who loneliest are,  
 In life and in desire, crowds never ; knows,  
 Nay, makes himself inevitably, ghostlike ;  
 He lives from men apart ; he wakes and walks  
 By nights, he puts himself into the world  
 Above him ; and he is what but few see.  
 No peace, choice, chance is his of happier being,  
 Till his secret told, the occult hoard he show.  
 Yet seeks he none, save of his own dear blood ;  
 Lets generations pass, till his like turns up ;  
 Nor him, unless with reverence brave bespoke,  
 Thinks fit to infeoff, his heir : for knows he not  
 He only, to that old hid treasure, truth ?  
 And the world wonders shortly how some one  
 Hath come so rich in soul. It little dreams  
 Of the poor ghost that made him. Each this spirit  
 Receives, transmits. But while inventive soul  
 The bearings and the workings of all things  
 Around, knows more than other ; knows all ends  
 Of nature meet and fit ; wit, wisdom, worth,  
 Goodness and greatness ; to sublimity  
 Beauty approachful ; and his purpose seems

But hesitantly to reach, he to himself  
 Lives in thought, secularly ; as a planet world  
 Labouring slowly seemingly up the void,  
 But with infinite pace to immortal eyes, and knowing  
 Who means the bard's great functions, must not sole  
 Be as nature perfect, but in art perfect ;  
 And himself measuring 'gainst pure mind, and high  
 Extolled above himself, will seek some theme  
 Where spiritual element most majestic shows,  
 All covering, not all constituting ; thought  
 Enkindling, as in some conflagrant wood,  
 By lightning fired, or swept by hurricane's feet,  
 With whirlwinds winged, bough chafe bough, till all burn,  
 Like heaven's star-written prophesies : thus, conceive ;—  
 Time, shattered shadow of eternity, cast  
 On the troubled world as the sun shows brokenly  
 Upon wavelets, time, but a second to the dead,  
 Had seen elapse unconscious many an age ;  
 And the reek o' the world's great burning, o'er the skies  
 Trailed, was fast wearing into air away ;  
 When a saint stood before the throne, and cried,  
 Blessèd be thou, Lord God of worlds that are,  
 Have been, and are to be ! for infinite like  
 With thy creation, their destruction, wise,  
 Just, thou, in both,—Give me a world. God gives ;  
 And the world was. How this new orb was made,  
 Show : where it shone ; who ruled, abode therein,  
 Worshipped, and loved ; their natures, duties, hopes ;  
 Let it be pure, wise, holy, beautiful.  
 If otherwise not. so made by stress of heaven,  
 Kindly forced good ; we have had enough of sin  
 And folly here to embrace even change of chains.  
 Show God as fatherlike, going thither mildly ;  
 All blessing, cursing none ; no need for those,  
 That he shall come in glory new to himself,  
 With light whereto the lightning's shall be shadow,  
 And the sun's, sadness ; borne on a car self-teamed,  
 High wheeled, of burning worlds, within whose rims  
 Whole hells glow ; and beneath whose course dry up  
 Like drops of dew, the starlets faint, of space.

*Student.* It is a theme I want. What theme remains ?

*Festus.* One that shall start and struggle within thy breast

Like to a spirit, in its tomb at rising,  
 Rending the stones, and crying ' Resurrection ! '  
 What theme remains ! Thyself, thy race, thy love,  
 All sanctified, the faithless, and the full  
 Of faith in God ; thy race's destiny. Know  
 Every believer is God's miracle.  
 Blend all in one great holy work, which first,

A handful of eternal truth, shall men  
 A heartful, after, make ; bid bury with them :  
 Fair hands shall turn, idolatrous, and bright eyes  
 Sprinkle their sparkles o'er it with their tears.  
 The young, gay, brave shall seek 't with joy ; the old  
 Still hearty in decline, whose happy life  
 Hath blossomed downwards like the purple bell-flower,  
 Closing the book shall utter lowly ; death,  
 How little ! 'tis life in God that's infinite.  
 Believe thou art inspired, and thou art.  
 Behold the bard. He is wont to make, unite,  
 Believe ; the world to doubt and part and narrow.  
 That he believes he utters. What the world  
 Utters, it trusts not. Pray we, time may come,  
 When all who would raise men's minds may be God inspired  
 To utter truth, and feel like love for men.

*Student.* One thing I'd know, thy friend's faith.

*Festus.*

Ah ! I see.

Though cognizant of his temper, culture, taste,  
 We know not what a man is, till we know  
 What he believes ; that known, all's well-nigh known.  
 Well, this is what his faith was, faith in God.  
 It was right enough to ask. Thou art as one  
 Who roaming haply lands remote, arrived  
 At some strange gated city, whose domes and spires  
 While yet far off have piqued his spirit to learn  
 Its fabulous passed, its legendary renown,  
 Its present life, its people's exploits, tasks, toils.  
 Their haunts of pleasure, halls of science, art,  
 By pencil fine or chisel glorified,  
 The abodes of learning, catacombs of wit  
 And seminaries of thought he paces ; scans  
 Their courts of sacred justice ; tribune, throne,  
 Senate ; treads, pleased, the proud embattled keep  
 Of princely governance ; and yet longs,—all these  
 Seen, seen !—to view God's children at their best ;  
 And mark how high their flood of thought devout  
 Hath borne them up in their chief shrine of old,  
 By them prededicate to Divinity ; mind  
 Made holy, needs, seeks deity most ; so there,  
 Ingliding stilly, with the vespering sun,  
 Through curtained porch, the sanctuary within,  
 Welcomed by looks none but devout or kind,  
 He kneels ; thanks heaven for hourly mercies ; pleads  
 For a blessing upon those he loves, afar  
 Or near ; and thus with brethren worshipping  
 One Father, feels, whate'er their social claims  
 Art-wise, or civil, on man's just sympathies  
 Fraternal, spiritual, men each other know  
 Through fellowship best in God. But what his creed

I scarce dare say, so simple and brief it seemed ;  
But as heaven high, as earth broad, it embraced  
All souls of men.

*Student.* Poets, I think, henceforth  
Are the world's best teachers; mountainous minds, their  
heads  
Are sunned, long ere the rest of earth. I would  
Be one such.

*Festus.* It is well. Burn to be great.  
Each mountain stands inspired as touching heaven.  
But pay not praise to loftiest things alone.  
The plains are everlasting as the hills.  
Revere God's order everywhere. And now,  
Thou hast heard thus much from one not wont to give  
Nor seek advice, remember whatsoe'er  
Thou art as man, suffer the world; 'twas thus  
God made; entreat it kindly, and forgive.  
They who forgive most shall be most forgiven.  
Dear Helen, I will tell thee what I love  
Next to thee;—poesie.

*Helen.* What! can there be  
Aught even second to me in thy love?  
Doth it not distance all things?

*Festus.* Sooth to say,  
I once loved many things; ere I met with thee,  
My one blue break of beauty in the clouds,  
Bending thyself to me as heaven to earth.  
Even now 'tis variable, this love. To-night,  
It is, as thou seest: to-morrow—

*Helen.* Well?

*Festus.* Oh, nothing.

*Helen.* Mine, too, moonlike may seem to lessen or grow,  
Because not visible all at once. But felt  
Trulier by me in inmost consciousness,  
It knows no night, nor morrow, like the sun.  
Unchangeable even as space, it still shall be  
When yon bright suns, in time's great hour-glass, what  
But sands? are run out.

*Festus.* Without woman, man's  
But half man; and as idolators their gods  
Heavenless, we deify first what we adore.

*Student.* It is not idolatry life looks most for now.  
There's work at hand, which, not achieved, I'd look  
Simply on life as keeping me from God,  
Stars, heaven, and angels' bosoms. I lay ill:  
And the dark hot blood pulsed, plunging through and  
through me.  
They bled me and I swooned; and as I seemed  
To die, a soft sweet sadness seized my soul,  
That made me feel all happy. But my heart

Would live, and rose and wrestled with the soul,  
 Twining around it as a snake an eagle,  
 Which stretched its wings and strained its strength in vain,  
 Mine eyes unclosed anon, and I looked up,  
 And saw the sweet blue twilight and one star,  
 One only star in heaven, I felt I had been  
 Quite near to, hoveringly; and then I wished  
 I had died and kept to it; but, my pulse revived,  
 Was glad I lived to love life once again.  
 And so our souls turn round upon themselves  
 Like orbs upon their axles; what was night  
 Is day; what day, night; God will guide us on;  
 Body and soul, through life and death.

*Helen.* Our life  
 Is comely as a whole; nay, something more;  
 Like rich brown ringlets, with odd hairs all gold.  
 We women, have four seasons, like the year.  
 Our spring is in our lightsome girlish days,  
 When the heart within us laughs for simplest joy;  
 Ere yet we know what love is, or the ill  
 To be loved by those we love not. Summer is,  
 When loving and beloved, we double our life,  
 And seems short; from its very splendour seems  
 To pass the quickliest; crowned with flowers it flies.  
 Autumn, when some young thing with tiny hands,  
 Cheeks rosy and bright, and flossy tendrilled locks,  
 Is wantoning about us day and night.  
 And winter is, when these so loved, have perished,  
 If we ourselves depart not ere that time,  
 For the heart ices then. And the next spring  
 Is in another world, if such world be.  
 Some miss one season, some another. This  
 Shall have them early, and that late; and yet  
 The year wear round with all as best it may.  
 There is no rule for it; but in the main  
 It is as I have said.

*Festus.* My life with thee  
 Is like a song; and the sweet music thou  
 Which doth accompany it.

*Student.* Tell me, did thy friend  
 Write aught beside the work thou tellest of?

*Festus.* Nothing.  
 Thereafter, like the burning peak he fell  
 Into himself, and was missing evermore.

*Student.* If not a secret, pray, who was he?

*Festus.* Who?  
 I say not, I.

*Helen.* Guess!

*Student.* Nay, it is passed all guess.

## XXIV.

Soul's minor mysteries shown by light of faiths,  
 None wholly false, imperfect all ; the true  
 No secrecies hath, no ritual. But not all  
 Who love truth, and are brave to seek, are free  
 To find. Who curiously, else unprepared,  
 Force themselves into her presence, earth not yet  
 Ripe for her glorious advent, perish ; fruit  
 Untimely fallen. Death's harvest home begins.  
 Be the first fruits holy, let us hope, to God.  
 One of our fair ones dreadly quits life's field :  
 And he, the enthusiast friendliest, what of him ?  
 Precipitate as a comet, when it dips  
 Below the undulant edge of the keen sea,  
 Smoothly serrate as Indian dag, or sword  
 Flame-waved, cherubic, in the ancient east,  
 Far-flashing by the gates of Eden, he ends.  
 How near is utterest failure to success !  
 Ambitious of all excellence, he, no more,  
 Save in his life-work, like the luminous shade  
 Sign, heavenward, of earth's progress 'mong the spheres  
 From the equinoctial towering high, at eve,  
 Lightens our orbital path. Ambition's ends  
 In view, its means being no more needed, love,  
 Nor friendship, but by ceasing, aid. The spirit  
 Of woe foretels, and lo ! it comes to pass.

*A Rocky Promontory, overhanging the Sea.*

FESTUS *alone.* Afterwards LUCIFER.  
*Midnight. Moonlight.*

*Festus.* O starry harp of heaven, O poet's star !  
 To man, prophetic, since wild earth hath changed  
 Her astral aim, of worlds to will supreme  
 Attuned, and soul from death's numb hand redeemed  
 Godwards ; once more, once more in thankful joy  
 Through midnight's mighty silence, the divine  
 Vibrations of thy world-strung chords I hear.  
 Theirs is the strength of ages. Infant time  
 Smote on them playful ; and the eternal toy  
 Decks, still, heaven's aery halls. Thou, still, unchecked,  
 And changeless circlest round God's feet ; to us  
 Of life triumphant sign o'er sleepful death  
 Eternal, and necessity colleagued  
 In pact resistless save to spirit inspired  
 Of love ; whereto our most of joy and grief  
 We owe, soul-testing, sacred both. For here,  
 If fate, our sovran rule, in worlds to come,  
 Necessity shall be thrall to us divine ;  
 We homaging her each separately ; but oned  
 With God, collectively, her liege. So shown  
 Life's full communion with its lord, let joy  
 By his touch imparted, through thy starry strings

*Festus.* I will. Allured  
By hope fraught promises thy words conveyed,  
(Of revelations of the light occult,  
I, long, in kind reserve deemed fitlier hid,

We with our studious friend, at his request  
Thrice urged, went forth to meet him, named by thee  
Sun-seer, but whom the desolate end of all  
Proved rather dread adept of darkneses.  
It was the hour of stars. Spring's crescent sphere  
Followed the vanishing footsteps of her lord,  
For that she loved the light: 'twas eve, I said,  
As thou wouldst have; I had marked the setting sun  
Calling all kindred glories of the world,  
All friendly royalties, earth, sea, and air,  
To attest his end imperial, for that they  
Must likewise learn to die, who came and stood  
Round his orb'd bier, death-hallowed; came too, there  
Nature, as earth's high priestess fain to screen  
The death-throes of titanic light, and drew  
High o'er heaven's blood dyed altar, with the fires  
Flushed of faith's evening sacrifice, a veil  
Celestial, of all hues, rose, amber, pearl,  
Lilac, and palest green;—like a faint thought, this,  
A half reluctant memory interfused  
With dreams, of earth in paradise;—far round  
The impurpling sea-flood, fired with opaline gleams,  
Heaved, as though pondering every wave; below  
Our feet, rough ruddying crags; the horizon barred  
With beams of blinding gold shot lancewise forth,  
In permanent lightnings, levelled as to pierce  
The dying sun-god; high o'erhead, the while,  
Heaven's boundless, stainless blue, star-glinting, flecked  
With crimson featherings shadowing off towards night,  
Pure, peaceful, prayerful, all consoling. Fell  
Now round us twilight swift, and as we sped  
By wild rough windings through a holy land  
Of solar cult primæval, solemnized  
In prehistoric eld, the age of fire,  
They, heart full of expectancy, and I  
Faithless in aught that might to us conduce  
Of wisdom, or of weal,—how fate confirms  
All saddest premonitions! deep in thought,  
Mute, save in whispered wordlets, or mere signs,  
A hill we reached, by moonrise, on whose head  
Hearselike, a sable grove nodded. We mount;  
And midway the ascent, descend, and strike  
A foot-road, forked like a divining rod,  
One branch whereof we track, until it lead  
To a stone of worship, sun devote, which us  
Shrining within its shadow, struck to the heart,  
A holy chill; while round its base, earth-tombs,  
Crowd, waves immoveable of a sea of death.  
Thee wait we long time here; and whiles, this rock,—  
As maenhir once by Keltic spouse adored,

Babeless, who oft with lank and fawning breasts,  
Fretted, at midnight cold, its bossy side ;  
Which rustic's eye now shuns, but most abhors  
By ghostly twilight, deeming fiend transformed ;—  
This rock, thrice circling we, as type of ours,  
Sun spiritual, supreme rock, hail, hand-linked.  
Thence pressing on, breathless, a dell we near  
Wherein secreted lay, below a tall  
And rugged precipice, a glassy pool,  
Like an enchanted mirror, in the breast  
Hid of a dreadful wizard, of all speech  
Disdainful, ere he prove his threatened power ;  
And glowering nigh the foot of the imminent cliff  
Opposed, a cave but late discoverable,  
And save to us unknown. The arch-seer here  
Receiving us, as we advanced, withdrew  
Inwards ; and as we left the outer world,  
A blast premonitory caused the groves  
Groan o'er our heads : in vain low thunder-peals  
Ejaculated just warning. By command  
We enter, hapless all, head bared and foot  
Naked ; and wade a purifying rill,  
Which o'er its couch, pale alabaster, veined  
With glittering purple glode. A strait anon,  
Jagged and dark, dragged through, we enter crouched,  
A high-pitched cave where dwelled of old, if sere  
Tradition err not, and what wiselier shows ?  
The prediluvian giants of the land ;  
Vault upon vault outbranching ; not unlike  
The cave close bordering on the coasts of heaven,  
Where, in the sub-celestial empire hid  
The offended sun his head, till wooed by gods,  
And sued by men prostrate, so feign the bards  
And bonzes of Zipang—his staff of light  
He seized, and reassumed his rolling throne :  
Sceptre and staff of light that ere the stars  
Were, out of depths chaotic in the hand  
Of heaven's supreme the rocky scum of fire  
Stirred, whence arose life's morning land divine ;—  
An underworld abysmal excavate  
In masonry divine. His hands here smote  
The arch-mage, and the thunder of his palms  
Re-echoed palpably o'erhead. A gush  
Of blinding lightnings showed us now the roof,  
A glimmering voil, spar-starred, where travelling lights,  
Like planetary seats of social gods,  
By craft titanic fulminated into shape,  
Self-levered, fabrics of artistic fire,  
Mysterious moved ; through whose bright art we read  
The awful wonders of that uneyed sphere.

Where, as though nature craved to represent,  
In forms of time, eternal histories,  
That she the scions of the wise might teach,  
In one vast, visible lecture, all to come,  
All passed, all present, here insculpt were seen  
Wrought out from primal matter nebulous,  
As in marmoreal epic, deed by deed,  
The marvels of the Omnicausal hand,  
And end of man triumphal. Here we viewed  
The first essay of force to form in laws  
The mountain playthings of the infant sun.  
Here, wrought in stony flames, the age of fire;  
The earth one vast volcano vomiting forth  
Her gradual continents and seas of sand;  
Islands extemporizing in a breath.  
Grouped there the Preadamic races huge,  
Of mastodon and mammoth doomed to swell  
Some second chaos with their wreck sublime.  
Enormous, and now fabulous, shapes of yore  
Cross-peopling all the elements; wingèd bulls  
Star-yoked, that led the morn an endless chase.  
Sad gryphon eagle-sired and lion-born;  
Unslumbering gold-ward, jealous of all gems;  
And those commingled births whom Belus smote  
Headless, and drowned in gore, his mission here;  
Mild rokh, simorgh, wise sun-spirit; all these  
In amiable converse shown, or strife,  
In lifelike petrifications crowd the walls.  
The heavenly age, the age of paradise  
Here glowed in gold-veined marbles; darkened sole  
By angel treason and the fall of gods;  
Wherewith unconscious earth too sympathized.  
Here symbolled by the thousand-branched tree,  
From whose broad boughs hung constellated gifts,  
And every wish delicious of the heart;  
The tree of life there deathless; but elsewhere  
Withered too soon; and here, with meteor wave  
Victorious, o'er the works of God and man  
Surging, the all-oblitative flood.  
And there, too, limned in adamantine lines,  
The age of evil, when to angel hands,  
To scepterèd Sataël, and to Samaël crowned,  
Chiefs of the original hierarchies of heaven  
And their base compeers of the mountain oath,  
Virtue and leave were given to deluge earth  
With woes all natural, shadow and reverse  
Of every good gift God had showered on man;  
Now checked by pain, or nullified by fine  
On every blessing. Swiftly malignant these,  
Embittering every element with death,

Taught men the lust of war, beasts thirst of blood ;  
Gave reptile, insect, herb, venom ; and poured  
In earth's veins poisons mineral ; 'neath the hills  
The motive powers of earthquakes rooted ; sowed  
Death's seed explosive ; angered air with storms.  
These made the hollow columns of the sea  
And lofty as the tower of glass that rose  
Mid ocean, sudden, by the astounded bark  
Of Partholoin straight-helmed for Ierne's isle ;  
Those watery pillars, death-black, that oft burst,  
Swollen, nigh ship becalmed on sweltering seas,  
Beneath the hot line ; and, ere now, have quenched  
The life-light in some fugitive skiff, escaped  
Like truant cygnet from its parent sail,  
Stealthy, on lawless quest ; in marble here  
Portrayed with industry malicious, these,  
To man and angel, foes, the lightnings forged,  
Which he who owneth all things, after seized,  
Wrapped in authentic thunders, and by hands  
Angelic, Usdom wracked, with the grim towns  
In salt slime sleeping 'neath the sea of death ;  
Those, fell disease, contagious pest and plague ;  
These, guileful, taught the craft of sorceries,  
Black magic and the dæmon-thralling spells ;  
The blood-draught necromantic, and the charms  
Whereat the shadowy nations of the dead  
Shudder, and flickering upwards to the light  
Unfold the soul-sought secret, or convey  
Foreboding fatal to the wretch death-doomed.  
These in man's heart all evil passions sowed,  
And woman's richer and more fertile mould ;  
Such snakelike envyings, wolflike jealousies,  
As when, for love of fair Khalmanah, Cain  
Him slew—since feared as Hades, god of death,  
Whom Eva, unhappy mother of mankind,  
Beauty of Æden, sinful though revered,  
Bewept a hundred years ; so long the dead,  
While death was new to earth and life, were mourned ;  
These taught the sword to shape, and those the shield,  
Bow, poleaxe, spear ; these jewels for the fair,  
Brightly seductive ; women were their spoil  
From the beginning ; these, and their spurious brood  
Gigantic, in whose ears apostate, preached  
That patriarch who, accredited of God,  
Ambassador to angels, was in heaven  
Received, by death untouched, ere Noah as yet,  
With his majestic consort, great Tidea,  
Queen-mother of the nations,—deified  
After as Vesta or Kybelé, all  
Her offspring kings of earth tripartite,—sought

God-warned, the ark, with all their living train.  
Instructed by our guide in all we viewed,  
Though seen but darkling, and in briefest speech,  
(Out of the hall of elements slow we passed  
Into the fane of life. Here graven the great  
And holy war which raged 'twixt earth and heaven,  
Betwixt the pious race and impious tribes,  
And microcosmically still in man,  
In craggy frieze glared round the orbed dome.  
Here hundred-handed vices, titan sins,  
And giant crimes, seek from the mountain-heart  
Of heaven, the high-throned Thunderer to tear;  
But he, with fiery hail, hurls all to hell;  
Sulphureous remedies there to underlie,  
Asbestine; purifying, blanching woes.  
Aurmazd and Ahriman there, in balanced strife,  
The doubtful sphere contest; and here, in stone  
Prophetically white, the conquest glad  
Of the beneficent power. Young Orus there,  
His sire the sun, his mother mild the moon;  
O sacred night-sun, soul of heaven, which through  
The starry welkin wanderest, in divine  
And radiant sorrow seeking for thy lord,  
Him living ne'er thou wilt find; but lo! thy son  
The evil godhead Typhon slays, and reigns  
Wise, silent child of light. Here next, the god,  
Incarnate ninefold, crushed with sole divine  
To death, and strangled with resistless hand  
The snake-god; holy fiction! The Asoors there,  
In armed millions by the deities  
Vanquished, draw off their whole malignant host,  
Destined some day to perish, fiendish sprites;  
But first the tale of their defeat bequeath  
In scroll perpetual to these cliff-like walls.  
Here, Izdubar's descent, love-led, to hell;  
The ascent of Psyche, there, love-led, to heaven;  
Insculpt exemplary; virtue's pilgrimage,  
Self-guided through all earth, more arduous task.  
Towards the opposing side our feet we turned.  
Here the divine and human wrestled; there,  
Where faith's bright orbit reason's intersects,  
The human and angelic; there, in chair  
Of starry state, sate the proud queen, condemned  
The everlasting sacrifice to see  
Of her pure daughter, like humanity  
Waiting with outstretched arms to be redeemed  
By some divine deliverer; there, with head  
Hurled downwards from the topmost height of heaven,  
The righteous but self-glorifying king  
Who thought mere merit enough to earn a throne

In God's eternal kingdom; fatal fault!  
Wherefore, as clutching at, with either hand  
A world, but grasping nought, serene reproof  
He gives to all immortal. Here, hosts terrene,  
Celestial, and infernal, armed with faith,  
Or infidel fury fought; these sworn to rase  
In ruin, cities reared by hands divine,  
Or for like ends; such even as holy Rome,  
City of cities, earth's crownèd capital:  
Or sacred Troy; fount, fig-tree, temple and all  
Sites of that holiest legend, which began  
By discord's apple with one all-conquering steed,  
Huge, rampant, ends; or that gold builded erst,  
On sceptre tridentine of Indian god,  
Men's sins degraded into stone, and now  
Debased to clay, but still no whit cognate  
To common earth, but of time's earliest heaven,  
One unadulterate section; those to defend  
Their starry battlements; their walls inlaid  
With purest virtues, and their streets and squares  
Paved with celestial wisdom. Here the north,  
Icy but strong; and there the burning south  
Led by its passionate queen, contending stood  
In fierce and fateful fray; death looking on,  
Well pleased; he alway won, whoever lost.  
Here nation after nation fought the world  
For universal dominance, fought in vain;  
One sole elect of creatures hath that gift.  
Before all, at the end a female form  
Gigantic kneeled, dread guardian of the sphere,  
Now interceding for its life; but she,  
The fatal sign once given, ordaining death,  
Relentless tears the solid universe  
Asunder: and on either side, behind,  
The final field so feared of old to be  
Between the mundane gods and giants fought,  
Ere comes the reign of darkness, when with deaths  
Commatural, all shall perish. We, our eyes  
Edged on the growing blacknesses which now  
Mute lightnings lit in mock of light, and now  
Blind thunder groped round. Ever and anon,  
What spectres seemed, flitted athwart the dark,  
But dimly eyeable. Locked hand in hand,  
Our fair heroic trembling 'tween her guards,  
But firm in spirit as the patriot queen  
In golden chains bound Romewards, so to grace  
Her victor's triumph, each step doomed to move  
Time's ruth, and wrong's eternal recompense;  
We through a long laborious road, rock-arched,  
Creep speechless, whence emerging in a cave

Like the green grot where Zeus in secret grew  
To stripling godhood, hid from cruel time;  
Or stalactital palace, subterrene  
In Hellas, where the Nine kept secret court,  
And crownless ruled o'er kingly servitors;  
We meet with for the first time othersome  
Ourselves beside, all silent; to the voice  
Hearkening, of one, in face and form like him  
Who first the name of wisdom's lover claimed;  
Heard first of men, heaven's spherul harmonies;  
At Metapontum wrote upon the moon;  
And at Olympia bared the golden thigh,  
In sign of solar lineage; proof supreme.  
Listening we stood, charmed; reassured in faith,  
Heartlightened, on we fared; and following close  
The echoes of our guide's feet, in the heart  
Of a dim dome we stood, of sightless bounds,  
And named of immortality; nor far  
Our haughty leader found, whose steps we had tracked,  
Though deigning commune with us scarcely none,  
High on an arch 'neath which a torrent foamed,  
Red with its torch's glare, bloodlike. Beyond,  
A mount of awe there loomed which seemed inspired  
With palpitating light, that came and went  
Wilderingly; and thither pointing, 'lo! the end  
Of our emprise;' with these words cut our guide,  
As with a sword, the silence; then, 'who truth  
Would win, as she awaits us, in yon shrine  
Yearning the victor soul to satiate  
With wisdom, and to crown with life divine,  
Earthlife, and her embrace deific give,  
Know that to arms untested, hearts untried,  
She trusteth nought. Let not yon seething stream  
One therefore who would gain such priceless prize  
Affright; but let the wight content with less,  
Smile colder, and, more conventional embrace,  
Tread, after me, the arch.' Here quailed she first,  
Of the end too emulative, the mean untried,  
Who finally,—but stay. Our student feere  
Bolder than I, because incredulous, rid  
Not solely of superstition, but mere faith,  
As God would have, plunged with me in that tide  
And struggled nigh to safety. Once, a prow,  
More like a raft, adrift from upper bank,  
Held promised falsely; till, at last, a rock  
Grasping, this, loose at base betrayed his trust  
And crushing, soon that death-flood hurried off  
Into earth's caverned darkness, and the abyss  
Reverberant always with its watery roar  
And funeral wail perpetual; but to me

Now wading, floating now, safe transit vouched,  
Though sickening to the sense ; nor wist I this,  
Till, scaped, and scanty, from the perilous arch  
Which crumbled as she crossed, nor left retreat,  
My love I met, who saw, and fainting told ;  
Told, shuddering, like the tree whose sense of sin,  
Howbeit involuntary, the ages fail  
To calm, as weighted yet with the pendent power.  
I meanwhile shore who had reached heard, heard dismayed,  
Thrice called his name aloud, which, to no end,  
Unanswering silence sadly learned, thenceforth  
Wasted, like time upon unquickened stars.  
Scant leisure ours was for lament ; for now,  
Fiercer and far more urgent grew the mien  
Of our mysterious leader, who aloof  
Held him, and hailed as careless of our loss,  
Or witless, for his countenance saw we not.  
And now, all light snatched from us, hie we on,  
We twain, I bearing up her slackening steps  
Amid darkneses successive, each more deep  
Than other, and far thunders whence we opined,  
Day, egress nearer than they seemed ; to us  
A time of torture, but determined soon.  
And now, the light from out that fane of fire  
We seemed unskilled to escape from, and within  
Whose slowly quivering bosom, half distent  
By smothered splendour, like the sacred side  
Of Athyr, when in travail of the sun,  
Blew, flowerlike, open, and with arrowy glance  
Showed us one only feat to consummate.  
From out that lofty shrine of roseate glow,  
And 'twixt the stops of stormy thunders now  
Voices and harps and far, faint harmonies  
We list ecstatic, as though deadliest fate  
Would masque it, faëry wise. Here, each one's foot  
Instinct with caution, easy seemed ascent  
Nor either paused, until the brink we touch  
Unseen till lighted on of a horrent chasm,  
Sacred in use, defensive of the fane,  
Forbidding access uninvited. There  
But on the thither side, our sun-seer stood  
Who gazed that orb nor blinked ; for on his side  
New risen upon the summer's narrow night,  
Sheer through a mountain fissure shone the sun,  
The fane within lightening. That rocky rift,—  
Sheer as the ghastly vein, shale blue, earth's heart  
Explosive once, through granate shot, league-long,  
Now seas persistent have well breathed, and left  
Hollow, as tube twixt isle and isle that swings  
Echoing ; clean, evident, as the iron gash

Helmwise, that 'compts on battle-fields for one,—  
I, only bidden o'ervault, one comforting sign  
To her, so left, expressed, clear ; and clear death.  
Enter, to me, he cried ; and enter alone ;  
Soul that would learn truth's sum must learn it sole,  
To her who had me companioned then a seat  
In the immarbled rock assigning, he  
In common silence, all, beside her stood,  
Each thenceforth mute. I entering, solitary,  
View first mid many an arched recess, star-circled  
In order ranged, and from grade to grade of all  
Perfection, each mysterious symbol truth  
Hath hallowed, every teeming sign faith holds  
In old and orient imagery, devote  
To sacred use, with mightiest meanings lined,  
Which wisdom worthful makes but to those wise,  
Lords of best learning, creed-skilled ; here conjoined  
In secret state emblazoned, rayed with words  
Divine, unutterable ; each charm by turns  
Opening in awful gradual, till achieved  
The one sole truth which crowns all creeds and suma.  
The thought of God is simple enough ; it is man  
Makes the world's mystery, who self-warned of powers  
Unlimited but for sense, cloud-lifed, conceives  
Beyond the impermanent skies the eternal soul  
Of all existence transitory or fixed ;  
Perfect though infinite ; knows through virtue truth,  
And as an educable divinity schooled  
Through Being's grand gradations loves the law,  
Of all intelligent life, just, bettering soul,  
Soul-freeing, joining whole with God ; yet lives  
Doubt's thrall and fool. This, one long instant, next  
Prostrate within the sanctuary,—and still  
My mind the effect sublime of joy retains,  
Cleared, elevated, and sanctified by sight  
Of all faith's passed perplexities, to one  
Key yielding, in result the one same truth.  
My spirit grew great with gladness, there, as might  
Of old, some riverine god upon his side  
Leaning complacent, on his long career  
Reflective ; foamy fall, still, sunny reach,  
Shoal, and bend troublous, ere the bar which bounds  
His wave from ocean's, he o'ersurge ; so, I,  
Shrining within the spirit all faiths, all creeds,  
Knew at the last truth's oneness ; full content  
Of being and satisfaction with all life.  
Thus gladdening to have reached that shrine of shrines,  
Where light intelligible,—henceforth the sun's  
But a shadow shown,—all life illumines, I kneel  
In silent worship ; and thence rising, saw

Now wading, floating now, safe transit vouched,  
Though sickening to the sense; nor wist I this,  
Till, scaped, and scanty, from the perilous arch  
Which crumbled as she crossed, nor left retreat,  
My love I met, who saw, and fainting told;  
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Howbeit involuntary, the ages fail  
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Sheer as the ghastly vein, shale blue, earth's heart  
Explosive once, through granate shot, league-long,  
Now seas persistent have well breathed, and left  
Hollow, as tube twixt isle and isle that swings  
Echoing; clean, evident, as the iron gash

In ocean's trenchèd waves, in earth's broad vales ;  
In air's wide wind-streams ; in birth, growth, and death ;  
Bloom, fruitage, seed regenerative, decay,  
The wholesome waste of storms, the torrent's wrack ;  
The brooklet's smiling prattle ; in love, truth,  
Divine fear, provident virtue, hope of peace ;  
In the heart's aspiration after God's  
Just sanctity and approval ; for the rule  
Of righteousness, a rightlier balanced life  
To come ; and all the general good that aids :  
Even evil, but a less degree of good  
Made needful for progression. Separate soul  
Struggling against the imperfect and default,  
Back to the intelligent Light must needs advance,  
By conquered ills to attain the good supreme.  
While issuant thus from God's breast, spirit fares  
Variously through schooling spheres, and many a turn  
Calamitous, to death's nadir ; its return,  
All progress naturally, and intense delight,  
And conscious pressure towards the infinite shows.  
For evil, moral and natural, though the proofs  
Of imperfection necessary to all  
Created things, are, this, annulled by man's  
Perfectibleness ; by God's foredooming word  
That ; both concurrent ; frames the crucial test  
Each soul must pass ; and stand thereby, or fall.  
The fall hath fatal force, and in all spheres,  
As though with gravity's irresistible spell,  
Charms to deteriorate, and with low aims  
For loftier, cheats the inquisitive spirit. But who  
Can love's all saving faithfulness divine,  
That hath not erred ? nor separated the seeds  
Of good and evil, painful task, nor felt  
All evil hath temporal origin, and so ends ;  
But good, identical with God, endures  
To all eternity, and subtends the base  
Celestial of his universal life ?  
Thus all things from him, to him witness bear  
Assentient, as their source, their good. There's not  
An angel relegate to the outmost spheres,  
But vaunts his birth divine ; no creatural soul,  
No animate form that foots the soil, or creeps,  
Or ocean nether-tided wanders ; nay,  
There's not the tiniest lifelet flecks the air  
With wing invisible, who through his sires  
Preadamite ruled earth, but strange lineage boasts,  
And high and azure blood ; nor heaven itself  
From his proud pedigree spares ; but in his coat  
Quarters the arms of God. Man only,—skilled  
To anticipate the divine as virtue's meed

The ultimate scope of spirit and nature's end ;  
 To know each holy element source and mean  
 Of spiritual refinement ; God to trace  
 In ocean's rock commuting force, in earth's  
 Life flowing breast ; in air's inspiring breath,  
 His spirit renovative ; in natural fire  
 And flamy light of sun or star the strength  
 Annihilant of the whole ; in gentlest heat  
 His recreant force ; and in e'er during space  
 Boundless, of all save deity void, to acquire  
 Science supreme—in all things God ;—so learns  
 To graduate in heaven's mysteries, and in earth's,  
 Creation's, holiest orgies as to see  
 In the great dis severance of the essential One  
 Sole mean of self-diffusion through freed soul,  
 And spiritual commune with deity here ;  
 Whereby in all, the One confessing he  
 His secret of reunion apprehends,  
 Not to be reached save by adventurous spirit,  
 On arduous path, man's elevative fall,  
 Soul richening fine ; punishment covetable ;  
 Heart clarified through troubles ; and final rise  
 Of meditative perfection to the mind  
 Of joy deific ; to the spirit elect  
 Made righteous, hallowed, glorified with God,  
 In essence one, in nature myriadfold.  
 From every massive page I turned, there came  
 The spirit of consolation. Ending thus  
 The book I closed ; rejoiced, 'twas mine to know  
 The truth transformative of life, that God  
 The conscious Infinite wills by rendering soul  
 Wistful of his divinity, man to make  
 Free, blessed ; and, striving towards perfection, crown,—  
 So loves he those that to him turn,—with life  
 Immortal, his congenerate gift. And now,  
 Words heard I, whispering me to call within  
 The beauteous brave who had dared so much and earned  
 As to her it seemed, albeit I knew, and feared  
 The attempt to achieve more. Opening, then, intent  
 Again to approach her I so loved, and seek  
 Some sign to assure her present entrance, lo !  
 The chasm which yawned betwixt us, and at first  
 Scarce pace-wide, now showed fathomless, and broad,  
 As 'tween two waves, mid sea, rood-wide is stretched  
 Their tempest cradling hollow, hurricane rocked.  
 Desperate, I called ; but now behold the ground,  
 As though on rolling hinges nether-hidden,  
 Slode crabwise ; and methought,—nay, could it be ?  
 The temple against whose wall our leader leaned  
 Tottered, as though deliberant or to stand

Or fall. One moment more than sated sight.  
 For ah ! a shriek I heard ; and turning, viewed,  
 Slow sinking with the slab whereon she stood,  
 Down, irrecoverably down the abyss,  
 My loved one, like a sacrifice to night.  
 Glory and joy of life, creation's crown,  
 Now lost ; already do I feel the weight  
 Of woes perspective. Therefore time's broad stream  
 Flows o'er thine end in silence : hides thy doom.  
 To heaven she raised her finger, and was gone.  
 Nor saw I, nor aught knew, distinctly, more.  
 Save that in springing upwards for mere life,  
 That vast substructure, all, meseemed, was blent  
 With earth's interior chaos, and I passed,  
 The mysteries now in mystery all inwombed,  
 For aye, and ne'er to be by me resought,—  
 Clear through the death-rift, into heavenly day ;  
 For spirits are e'er born upwards, while in time,  
 As by Cæsarean birth. The orient sun,  
 Head of the house of heaven, the sire of days,  
 The manifestive light, the lord of joy,  
 Saluting prostrate, I beheld : and lo !  
 As when, in sight the axe, some wrongous wretch  
 Fear urged, confesseth, but one murtherous deed,  
 Still unsuspect, keeps back ; and with a groan,  
 And grinding shudder, locks it in his breast ;  
 Nor leaves his lips scarce room to vaunt of breath ;  
 So earth that fatal fissure with a crash  
 Closing, beheld I hide her deathful deed ;  
 While I, from shutting as from opening death,  
 Doubly escaped, seem scarce convinced of life.  
 Thou speakest not.

*Lucifer.* I have nothing to observe.  
 The quest of knowledge is man's deadliest pride ;  
 And me nor pride, nor death, surpriseth now.

*Festus.* Twain of my best supports, as though the earth  
 Should miss twin elements, my heart hath lost.

*Lucifer.* This spirit inquisitive which all things would  
 learn,  
 Learns all things nothing may be.

*Festus.* Ah ! Let be !  
 Life's intransmissible secret now she knows,  
 Knows but too well.

*Lucifer.* Go to. Have done with these,  
 Whose fates were doubtless fixed before all time ;  
 Coæval with the atoms.

*Festus.* Mystery, say,  
 Accounts for mystery. Meanwhile this to know  
 Of nature, God, man, truth, of all creeds core,  
 Outworths all gain beside, annuls all loss,

Pain, suffering ; close as to God's feet we have been.  
 What men believe beside nought helps, nor harms ;  
 Their primal faith this, Godwards. Thus it is  
 A great deliverance,—like mine own just passed,  
 Slipped through death's fingers, solemnizes life  
 Nay, sanctifies. One seems to hold the trust  
 More straight from God. No earthly mean we need,  
 No graduated conception of the gift,  
 To prove its worth, through fellow-creaturehood,  
 Or test our reasoning ; soul, rehomed, restalled,  
 Renewed, confirms spontaneously its vows,  
 Ta'en first when scarce intelligible.

*Lucifer.* And now,  
 Time threatens to forestall our course. Wilt do  
 A message for me ?

*Festus.* Aught I will that may  
 Ease and divert my mind.

*Lucifer.* True, I had forgot.  
 Seek then the fair Elissa : and with her  
 From time to time confer ; sometime 'twill need—  
 Upon thy coming ends, long hoped, which she  
 May sanction, perchance aid. Go ; waste no words.  
 Improve thy welcome.

*Festus.* I want something new.

*Lucifer.* Hence ! I assure thee pleasant company ;  
 More so than thine ; bright future, and—

*Festus.* I go.

*Guardian Angel.* Yes, go. But I unseen attend thee,  
 yet  
 To warn 'gainst cruel sin ; mayhap to save.  
 Not even he doth know that I am here.

*Lucifer.* Thus to dissemble suits me : me reminds  
 Of whilome triumphs. Well wots the world ere now,  
 That I have starred it on an ampler stage.  
 Meantime I get impatient for the end.  
 I trust this fair one so to assume, that she  
 In spirit commanding may the man's excite  
 As fitmost for such eminence. Then,—at last,—

*Festus.* Now though I do what I desire, or fail,  
 Each were not less an evil.

*Lucifer.* Nature, friend,  
 Is given to man to conquer.

*Festus.* But alas !  
 Not yet can we o'ercome our nature, here,  
 Would we.

*Lucifer.* If therefore passion strike the heart  
 Let it have length of line and plenteous play ;  
 The safety of superior principles  
 Lies in exhaustion of the lower ones  
 However vast or violent.

*Festus.*                                Such a thought  
Stands in the way of nothing ; not even man.  
But hesitancy is ominous.

*Lucifer.*                                Men and angels  
Obey the order of existence.

*Festus.*                                Fate !  
Who seeks thee everywhere, will find thee there.

## XXV.

Our story binds us still for a while to earth,  
And sea all aged, gray at once with years,  
And green with youth. Oft those unhappiest have  
Their heart's desire in dreams ; we dreaming that  
Not seldom shall befall us. And when love  
In creature worship merges, who can tell  
What 'tis we love ? Perchance incarnate evil.  
For now the evillest one's designs take shape ;  
Through beauty to be impressed upon the soul  
Tempted, that each in other rapt, and love  
Of world-pomp, chosen his final gift, all power,  
The end might swiftness happen. Not the less,  
One grain of holiest hope is sown, whence fields  
Other than ours, by patience tilled, shall wave  
With unimagined harvests.

*Garden and Bower by the Sea.*

LUCIFER and ELISSA. Afterwards FESTUS.

*Lucifer.* Night comes, world jewelled, as my bride  
should be.

Start forth the stars in myriads, at the sign  
Of light, divine usurper, as to wage  
War with the lines of darkness ; and the moon  
Pale ghost of light, comes haunting the cold earth  
After the sun's red sea-death, quietless.  
Immortal night ! I love thee. Thou and I  
Are of one strain. Heaven's eldest issue, we.  
He makes ; we mar together all things ; all  
But our own selves. Let love not make thee cold  
And tremble, or thou'lt chill me. That starry robe  
Thou wearest, makes thee lovelier. Love me, night !  
Catch me up to thee, mightiest one. To thee  
Thee only, fatal power might I unveil  
A plot so great, so just it must succeed,  
Were success merit's predicate. The friend  
Whose fate momentous most to man I treat,  
Long launched with me on a tempestuous track  
See, and still hotlier must I urge, that hurled  
On passion's treacherous shoals, his barque may yet

Founder, o'erfraught as 'tis with human doom ;  
 Doom, thou, O precreative night, who holdst  
 Within thy breast, the prime concept of things,  
 And their last outcome, mightst impart, wert thou  
 Oracular, as of old, as of old, kind.  
 Small help get I, elsewhere. But surely, here  
 Cometh mine earthly. I, in mine own toils  
 Seem to me tangled. Her high-natured soul  
 Takes seriously all. But to me no end,  
 In show, or earnest, save the end of all,  
 Remains. To that end all things be mere means.  
 Him for whose fall I care this beauteous dame  
 Shall duly dazzle ; and, for I think not much  
 Of ultimate perseverance, with their fates  
 So blent, if the threads prove pliable enough,  
 This way or that, by suffering, or by sin,  
 Or patent power, sublimed in secresy,  
 The world's works running gently down, no check  
 Will likely mar the smooth decline I mean.  
 All things have so far answered the sage plans  
 Friends, some, alack ! defunct of life and aim,  
 Long toiled, nor fruitlessly, to attain. At last  
 Earth shows in travail of an unborn king ;  
 The imperial infant, he ; and sooner now  
 Than he or any knows man's mightiest choice  
 Is being destined. See slowly, solemnly,  
 As riseth from the main the sacred moon,  
 Stately and still, she grows upon the night.  
 She sees me not. Ere yet she comes is time  
 To rectify my spirit to its just points  
 Above, around. How is it that now I thrill  
 More deeply 'neath her eye-glance than the gaze  
 Of spirit or angel ? Can this negative  
 Eternal be subdued by things of time ?  
 And paltriest affirmations of mere power,  
 If by him guided, bear the brunt of worlds ?  
 As still, when set the sun, in summer's tide,  
 Earth feels, though faintly, his presence ; and the night  
 Hath never total dark ; but round her head  
 In starry silence, light invisible feels  
 Mysteriously his blind way ; so, I now  
 Oppressed with what seems coming, as one doomed,  
 At day-dawn, which to all beside brings life :  
 To him death only. It is Elissa ! Welcome !—

*Elissa.* Is't not a lovely, nay, a heavenly eve ?

*Lucifer.* Thy presence only makes it so to me.  
 The moments thou art with me are like stars  
 Peering through my dark life.

*Elissa.* Nay, speak not so,  
 Or I shall weep, and thou wilt turn away  
 From woman's tears : yet are they woman's wealth.

*Lucifer.* Then keep thy treasures, lady! I would not have  
The world, if prized at one sad tear of thine.  
One tear of beauty can outweigh a world  
Even of sin and sorrow, heavy as this;  
But beauty cannot sin, and should not weep,  
For she is mortal. Oh! let deathless things  
Alone weep. Why should aught that dies be sad?

*Elissa.* The noble mind is oft too generous,  
And, by protecting, weakens lesser ones;  
And tears must come of feeling, though they quench  
As oft the light which love lit in the eye.

*Lucifer.* I meant not to be mournful. Tell me, now,  
How hast thou passed the hours since last we met?

*Elissa.* I have stayed the livelong day within this  
bower:  
It was here that thou didst promise me to come;  
Watching from wanton morn to repentant eve,  
The self-same roses ope and close; untired,  
Listening the same birds first and latest songs.  
And still thou camest not. To the mind which waits  
Upon one hour, the others are but slaves.  
The week hath but one day—the day one hour;  
That hour of the heart—that lord of time.

*Lucifer.* Sweet one! I raced with light, and passed  
the laggard  
To meet thee—or, I mean I could have done—  
Yea, have outsped the very dart of death—  
So much I sought; and were I living light  
From God, with leave to range the world, and choose  
Another brow than his whereon to beam;  
To mark what even an angel could but covet;  
A something lovelier than heaven's loveliness;  
To thee I straight would dart, unheeding all  
The lives of other worlds, even those who name  
Themselves thy kind; for oft my mind o'ersoars  
The stars; and, pondering upon what may be  
Of their chief lording natures, man's seems worst—  
The darkest, meanest, which, through all these worlds,  
Drags what is deathless, may be, down to dust.

*Elissa.* Speak not so bitterly of human kind;  
I know that thou dost love it. Hast not heard  
Of those great spirits, who the greater grow  
The better we are able them to prize?  
Great minds can never cease; yet have they not  
A separate estate of deathlessness:  
The future is a remnant of their life:  
Our time is part of theirs, not theirs of ours;  
They know the thoughts of ages long before.  
It is not the weak mind feels the great mind's might;

None but the great can test it. Feels the oak  
 Or reed the strong storm keenlier? Oh, unsay  
 What thou hast said of man; nor deem me wrong.  
 Mind cannot mind despise—it is itself.  
 Mind must love mind: the great and good are friends;  
 And he is but half great who is not good.  
 And, oh! humanity is the fairest flower  
 Blooming in earthly breasts; so sweet and pure,  
 That it might freshen even the fadeless wreaths  
 Twined round the golden harps of those in heaven.

*Lucifer.* For thy sake I will love even man, or aught.  
 Spirit were I, and a mere mortal thou,  
 For thy sake I would even seek to die;  
 That, dead or living, I might still be with thee.  
 But no! I'll deem thee deathless—mind and make,  
 And worthier of some spirit's love than mine;  
 Yea, of the first born of God's sons, could he,  
 In that sweet shade thy beauty casts o'er all,  
 One moment lay and cool his burning soul;  
 Or might the ark of his wide flood-like woe  
 But rest upon that mount of peace and bliss,  
 Thy heart imbosomed in all beauteousness.  
 Nay, lady! shrink not. Thinkest thou I am he?

*Elissa.* Thou art too noble, far. I oft have wished,  
 Ere I knew thee, I had some spirit's love;  
 But thou art more like what I sought than man:  
 And a forbidden quest, it seems; for thou  
 Hast more of awe than love about thee, like  
 The mystery of dreams which we can feel,  
 But cannot touch.

*Lucifer.* Nay, think not so! It is wrong.  
 Come, let us sit in this thy favourite bower,  
 And I will hear thee sing. I love that voice,  
 Dipping more softly on the subject ear  
 Than that calm kiss the willow gives the wave;  
 A soft rich tone, a rainbow of sweet sounds,  
 Just spanning the soothed sense. Come, nay me not.

*Elissa.* Do thou lead out some lay; I'll follow thine.

*Lucifer.* Well, I agree. It will spare me much of  
 shame  
 In coming after thee. My song is said  
 Of Lucifer the star. See, there he shines!

I am Lucifer, the star;  
 Oh! think on me,  
 As I lighten from afar  
 The heavens and thee;  
 In town, or tower,  
 Or this fair bower,  
 Oh! think on me;  
 Though a wandering star,  
 As the loveliest are,  
 I love but thee.

Lady! when I brightest beam,  
 Love, look on me;  
 I am not what I may seem  
 To the world or thee;  
 But fain would love  
 With thee above,  
 Where thou wilt be.  
 But if love be a dream,  
 As the world doth deem,  
 What is't to me?

*Elissa.* Could we but deem the stars had hearts, and  
 loved,  
 They would seem happier, holier, even than now;  
 And, ah! why not? they are so beautiful.  
 And love is part and union in itself  
 Of all that is in nature brilliant, pure;  
 Of all in feeling sacred and sublime.  
 Surely the stars are images of love:  
 The sunbeam and the starbeam doth bring love.  
 The sky, the sea, the rainbow, and the stream,  
 And dark blue hill, where all the loveliness  
 Of earth and heaven, in sweet ecstatic strife,  
 Seem mingling hues which might immortal be,  
 If length of life by height of beauty went:  
 All seem but made for love—love made for all:  
 We do become all heart with those we love:  
 It is nature's self—it is everywhere—it is here.

*Lucifer.* To me there is but one place in the world,  
 And that where thou art; for where'er I be,  
 Thy love doth seek its way into my heart,  
 As will a bird into her secret nest:  
 Then sit and sing; sweet wing of beauty, sing.

*Elissa.* Bright one! who dwellest in the happy skies,  
 Rejoicing in thy light as does the brave  
 In his keen flashing sword, and his strong arm's  
 Swift swoop, canst thou, from among the sons of men  
 Single out those who love thee as do I  
 Thee from thy fellow glories? If so, star,  
 Turn hither thy bright front; I love thee, friend.  
 Thou hast no deeds of darkness. All thou dost  
 Is to us light and beauty: yea, thou art  
 A globe all glory; thou who at the first  
 Didst answer to the angels which in heaven  
 Sang the bright birth of earth, and even now,  
 As star by star is born, dost sing the same  
 With countless hosts in infinite delight,  
 Be unto me a moment! Write thy bright  
 Light on my heart before the sun shall rise  
 And vanquish sight. Thou art the prophesy  
 Of light which he fulfils. Speak, shining star,

Drop from thy golden lips the truths of heaven.  
 First of all stars and favourite of the skies,  
 Apostle of the sun—thou upon whom  
 His mantle resteth—speak, prophetic beauty !  
 Speak, shining star out of the heights of heaven,  
 Beautiful being, speak to God for man !  
 Is it because of beauty thou wast chosen  
 To be the sign of sin ? For surely sin  
 Must be surpassing lovely when for her  
 Men forfeit God's reward of deathless bliss,  
 And life divine ; or, is it that such beauty,  
 Sometimes before the truth, and sometimes after,  
 As is a moral or a prophesy,  
 Is ever warning ? Why wert thou accorded  
 To the great Evil ? Is it because thou art  
 Of all the sun's bright servants nearest earth ?  
 Star of the morning ! unto us thou art  
 The presage of a day of power. Like thee  
 Let us rejoice in life, then, and proclaim  
 A glory coming greater than our own.  
 All ages are but stars to that which comes,  
 Sunlike. Oh ! speak, star ! Lift thou up thy voice  
 Out of yon radiant ranks, and I on earth,  
 As thou in heaven, will bless the Lord God ever.  
 Hear, Lucifer, thou star ! I answer thee.

Oh ! ask me ~~not to look~~ and love,  
 But bid me worship thee ;  
 For thou art earthly things above,  
 As far as angels be :  
 Then whether in the eve or morn  
 Thou dost the maiden skies adorn,  
 Oh ! let me worship thee !

I am but as this drop of dew ;  
 Oh ! let me worship thee !  
 Thy light, thy strength, is ever new,  
 Even as the angels' be :  
 And as this dewdrop, till it dies,  
 Bosoms the golden stars and skies,  
 Oh ! let me worship thee !

But, dearest, why that dark look ?

*Lucifer.*

Let it not

Cloud thine even with its shadow : but the ground  
 Of all great thoughts is sadness ; and I mused  
 Upon passed happiness. Well—be it passed !  
 Did Lucifer, as I do, gaze on thee,  
 The flame of woe would flicker in his breast,  
 And straight die out—the brightness of thy beauty  
 Quenching it as the sun doth earthly fire.

*Elissa.* Nay, look not on me so intensely sad.

*Lucifer.* Forgive me: it was an agony of bliss.  
 I love thee, and am full of happiness.  
 My bosom bounds beneath thy smile as bounds  
 The sea's unto the moon, his mighty mistress;  
 Lying and looking up to her, and saying,  
 Lovely! lovely! lovely! lady of the heavens!  
 Oh! when the thoughts of other joyous days,  
 Perchance, if such may be, of happier times,  
 Are falling gently on the memory  
 Like autumn's leaves distained with dusky gold,  
 Yet softly as a snowflake; and the smile  
 Of kindness, like thine, is beaming on me,  
 Oh! pardon, if I lose myself, nor know  
 Whether I be with heaven or thee.

*Elissa.* Use not  
 Such ardent phrase, nor mix the claim of aught  
 On earth with thoughts more than with hopes of heaven.

*Lucifer.* Hopes, lady! I have none.

*Elissa.* Thou must have. All  
 Have hopes, however wretched they may be,  
 Or blessed. It is hope which lifts the lark so high,  
 Hope of a lighter air and bluer sky;  
 And the poor hack which drops down on the flints,  
 Upon whose eye the dust is settling, he  
 Hopes, but to die. No being exists, of hope  
 Of love, void.

*Lucifer.* Yes, one is; the ancient Ill,  
 Dwelling and damned through all which is: that spirit  
 Whose heart is hate—who is the foe of God—  
 The foe of all.

*Elissa.* How knowest thou such doth live?  
 If one there be, the spirit foe of man,  
 It is only that inferiors still must strive.  
 With God they cannot strive nor dare to deem.  
 What single star could in itself abide  
 The onset of the armies of the heavens?  
 How then all armies his, who all hath made?  
 And made in love? Oh, trust me, never fell  
 By love, a spirit or earthly or of heaven.  
 Rather by love they are regenerate; love,  
 Mind's happiest privilege, of all living things  
 The sole sufficing reason. A trinity  
 There seems of principles, which represent  
 And rule created life; the love of self,  
 Our fellows, and our God. In all there reigns  
 One common feeling; each maintains the other;  
 Compatible all—all needful; this to life,  
 To virtue, that, to bliss, all. All, together,  
 Source, end, perfection show of being create.  
 From these three principles cometh every deed,

Desire, will, reasoning, good or bad ; to these  
 They all determine—sum and scheme : the three  
 In centre and in round one—wrap life's world  
 Sky-wise. Hail ! air of love, whereby we live ;  
 How sweet, how fragrant ! Spirit, though unseen—  
 Void of gross sign—is scarce a simple essence,  
 Immortal, immaterial, though it be.  
 One only simple essence liveth—God,—  
 Creator, uncreate. The brutes beneath,  
 The angels high above us, with ourselves,  
 Are but compounded things of mind and form.  
 In all things animate is therefore cored  
 An elemental sameness of existence ;  
 For God, being love, in love created all,  
 As he contains the whole, and penetrates.  
 Seraphs love God, and angels love the good :  
 We love each other ; and these lower lives,  
 Which walk the earth in thousand diverse shapes,  
 In whose mean being see God's humility,  
 According to their reason, love us too ;  
 The most intelligent affect us most.  
 Nay, man's chief wisdom's love—the love of God.  
 The new religion—final, perfect, pure—  
 Is that of mercy and love. Heaven's great command—  
 Our all-sufficing precept—is't not love ?  
 Truly to love ourselves we must love God—  
 To love God we must all his creatures love—  
 To love his creatures, both ourselves and him.  
 Thus love is all that's wise, fair, good, and happy.

*Lucifer.* How knowest thou God doth live ? Why did  
 he not,

With that same hand which scattered o'er the sky,  
 As this small dust I strew upon the wind,  
 Yon countless orbs, aye fixing each on him  
 Its flaming eye, which winks and blenches oft  
 Beneath his glance,—with the finger of that hand  
 Which spangled o'er infinity with suns,  
 And wrapped it round about him as a robe,  
 Why did he not write out his own great name  
 In spheres of fire, that heaven might alway tell  
 To every creature, God ? If not, then why  
 Should I believe when I behold around me  
 Nought, scarce, save ill and woe ?

*Elissa.*

God surely lives !

Without God all things are in tunnel darkness.  
 Let there be God, and all are sun—all God.  
 And to the just soul, in a future state,  
 Defect's dark mist, thick-spreading o'er this vale,  
 Shall dim the eye no more, nor bound survey ;  
 And evil, now which boweth being down

As dew the grass, shall only fit all life  
 For fresher growth and for intenser day,  
 Where God shall dry all tears as the sun dew.

*Lucifer.* O lady! I am wretched.

*Elissa.*

Say not so.

With thee I could not deem myself unhappy.  
 Hark to the sea! Like the near hum it sounds  
 Of a great city.

*Lucifer.* Say, the city earth;

For such these orbs are in the realms of space.

*Elissa.* I dreamed once that the night came down to me—  
 In figure, oh! too like thine own for truth,  
 And looked into me with his thousand eyes;  
 And that made me unhappy; but it passed;  
 And I half wished it back. Mind hath its earth  
 And heaven. The many petty common thoughts  
 Whereon we daily tread, as it were, make one,  
 And above which few look; the other is  
 That high and welkin-like infinity,—  
 The brighter, upper half of the mind's world,  
 Thick with great sun-like and constellate thoughts;  
 And in the night of mind, which is our sleep,  
 These thoughts shine out in dreams. Dreams double life;  
 They are the heart's bright shadow on life's flood;  
 And even the step from death to deathlessness,  
 From this earth's gross existence unto heaven,  
 Can scarce be more than from the harsh hot day,  
 To sleep's soft scenes, the moonlight of the mind.  
 The wave is never weary of the wind,  
 And in mountainous playfulness leaps to it always.  
 But mind, world-wearied, dooms itself in sleep.  
 Like a sweet smile, settling into proper sadness;  
 For sleep seems part of our immortality:  
 And why should anything that dies be sad?  
 Last night I dreamed I walked within a hall—  
 The concave of the world. Long shroud-like lights  
 Lit up its lift-like dome, and pale wide walls,  
 Horizon-like; and every one was there;  
 It was the house of death, and Death was there.  
 We could not see him, but he was a feeling:  
 We knew he was around us—heard us—eyed us;  
 But where wast thou? I never met thee once.  
 And all was still as nothingness; or as God,  
 Deep judging, when the thought of making first  
 Quickened and stirred within him; and he made  
 All heaven at one thought as at a glance.  
 Noise was there none; and yet there was a sound,  
 Which seemed to be half like silence, half like sound.  
 All crept about still as the cold wet worms,  
 Which slid among our feet, we could not 'scape from.

Round me were ruined fragments of dead gods—  
Those shadows of the mystery of One—  
And the red worms, too, flourished over these,  
For marble is a shadow weighed with mind;  
Each being, as men of old believed, who 'neath  
A dim starlight of truth religious lived,  
A moral night, contrast with ours,—distinct  
In form, and place, and power, But oh! not all  
The gathered gods of old could shine like ours,  
No more than all yon stars could make a sun.  
I felt my spirit's spring gush out more clear,  
Gazing on these: they beautified my mind,  
As rocks and flowers reflected do a well.  
Mind makes itself like that it lives amidst,  
And on; and thus, among dreams, imaginings,  
And scenes of awe, and purity, and power,  
Grows sternly sweet and calm—all beautiful  
With godlike coldness and unconsciousness  
Of mortal passion, mental toil; until,  
Like to the marble model of a god,  
It doth assume a firm and dazzling form,  
Scarcely less incorruptible than that  
It emblems: and so grew, methought, my mind.  
Matter hath many qualities; mind, one:  
It is irresistible: pure power—pure god.  
While wandering on I met what seemed myself:  
Was it not strange that we should meet, and there?  
But all is strange in dreaming, as in death,  
And waking, as in life: nought is not strange.  
Methought that I was happy, because dead.  
All hurried to and fro; and many cried  
To each other—Can I do thee any good?  
But no one heeded: nothing could avail:  
The world was one great grave. I looked, and saw  
Time on his two great wings—one, night—one, day—  
Fly moth-like, right into the flickering sun;  
So that the sun went out, and they both perished.  
And one gat up and spake—a holy man—  
Exhorting them; but each and all cried out—  
Go to!—it helps not—means not: we are dead.  
Death spake no word methought, but me he made  
Speak for him; and I dreamed that I was death;  
Then, that Death only lived: all things were mixed;  
Up and down shooting, like the brain's fierce dance  
In a delirium, when we are apt to die.  
'Hell is my heir: what kin to me is heaven?  
Bring out your hearts before me. Give your limbs  
To whom ye list or love. My son, Decay,  
Will take them: give them him. I want your hearts,  
That I may take them up to God.' There came

These words amongst us, but we knew not whence ;  
 It was as if the air spake. And there rose  
 Out of the earth a giant thing, all earth ;  
 His eye was earthy, and his arm was earthy ;  
 He had no heart. He but said, I am Decay ;  
 And as he spake, he crumbled into earth,  
 And there was nothing of him. But we all  
 Lifted our faces up at the word, God,  
 And spied a dark star high above in the midst  
 Of others, numberless as are the dead.  
 And all plucked out their hearts, and held them in  
 Their right hands. Many tried to pick out specks  
 And stains, but could not ; each gave up his heart.  
 And something—all things—nothing—it was Death,  
 Said, as before, from air—Let us to God !  
 And straight we rose, leaving behind the raw  
 Worms and dead gods, all of us—soared and soared  
 Right upwards, till the star I told thee of,  
 Looked like a moon—the moon became a sun :  
 The sun—there came a hand between the sun and us,  
 And its five fingers made five nights in air.  
 God tore the crown from off the sun's broad brow,  
 And flung the flaming glory flat to hell.  
 And then I heard a long, cold, skeleton scream,  
 Like a trumpet whining through a catacomb,  
 Which made the sides of that great grave shake in.  
 I saw the world and vision of the dead  
 Dim itself off—and all was life. I woke,  
 And felt the high sun blazoning on my brow,  
 His own almighty mockery of woe,  
 And fierce and infinite laugh at things which cease.  
 Hell bath its light—and heaven ; he burns with both,  
 And my dream broke, like life from the last limb—  
 Quivering ; so loth I felt to let it go,  
 Just as I thought I had caught sight of heaven,  
 And seen my last of life's unhappiness.  
 It came to nought, as dreams of heaven on earth  
 Do always. Have I touched some spirit-chord,  
 Adroitless, jars within thy mind ? For, see !  
 Like to a mountain battlemented with cloud,  
 Some gloomy thought,—what is't ? o'erprints thy brow ?

*Lucifer.* It is only this ; we are to part.

*Elissa.*

So soon !

Farewell, then, gentle stars ! To-night, farewell !  
 For we all part at once. It is thus the bright  
 Visions and joy of youth break up—but they  
 For ever. When ye shine again I will  
 Be with ye ; for I love ye next to him.  
 To all, adieu ! When shall I see thee next ?

*Lucifer.* Lady, I know not.

*Elissa.*

Say !

*Lucifer.*

Never, perchance.

*Elissa.* There is but one immortal in the world  
Who need say—never !

*Lucifer.*

What if I were he ?

*Elissa.* But thou art not he ; and thou shalt not say it.  
There is not a thing so ill I would not save  
Had I the power, from ill, and from itself.

*Lucifer.* A thought inspired ; it might have come from  
heaven.

Thou art the soul of kindness.

*Elissa.*

Who so speaks

The soul of kindness, speaks the mind of God ;  
For nature is all kind, and all he made.

Justice and power are attributes of God,  
But love his essence. How then harmonize  
Infinite love with creatures' endless woe ?

If every creatural act be finite, all  
God's infinite, then must his love at last  
Win every spirit, and all hate subdue.

Can God's will fail for ever ? But he wills,  
And must, that all souls should be saved and blessed.

As man could never be more just than God,  
Shall God, too, be less merciful than man ?

The soul create imperfect therefore sins  
Because imperfect ; but by him redeemed,  
As by an universal sacrifice,

Being is saved ; and sin gone, suffering ends.

Then, finite nature, which can only know

Imperfect good, by purifying spheres

Of wisdom and progression, grace sustained,

Harmonious lives with the eternal heavens.

Oh ! let us meet and talk of things like these,

Always. I love the thought of boundless good.

Stars rise and set, like beauteous, through all time,

With a sublime exactitude to meet

Each other's faces. Why not we, like them ?

*Lucifer.* I see no beauty—feel no love—all things  
Are unlovely.

*Elissa.*

O earth ! be deaf ; and heaven

Shut thy blue eye. He doth blaspheme the world.

Dost not love me ?

*Lucifer.*

Love thee ? Ay ! earth and heaven,

Together, could not make a love like mine !

*Elissa.* When wilt thou come again ? To-morrow ?

*Lucifer.*

Well.

And then I cross yon sea ere I return ;

For I have matters in another land.

Fear not.

*Elissa.* When will our parting days be over ?

*Lucifer.* Oh! soon—soon! Think of me, love, on the waters!

Be happy! and, for me, I love few things more  
Than at night to ride upon the broad-backed billow,  
Seaing along and plunging on his precipitous path;  
While the red moon is westering low away,  
And the mad waves are fighting for the stars,  
Or, say, their transient imagery, sea-sown,  
Like men for—what they know not.

*Elissa.*

Scorner!

*Lucifer.*

Saint!

*Elissa.* Much that is great hath earth; and but one sea,

To her as is her spirit; impulsive oft,  
As the mad monarch passion to the heart,  
Fathomless, overwhelming, which receives  
The rivers of all feeling; in whose depths  
Lie wrecked all nature's riches; God, O! sea!  
Stainless, immaculable by death, by earth  
Of grossliest burthened stream, unfiled; while all  
Accepting, purifying, commuting; God  
When first he made thee, moved upon thee then,  
And left his impress there, the same even now,  
As when thy last wave leapt from chaos.—Hark!  
Nay, there is some one coming.

*Festus (entering).*

It is I.

I said we should be sure to meet thee here:  
For I have brought one who would speak with thee.

*Lucifer.* Thanks! and where is he?

*Festus.*

Yonder. He would not

Come up so far as this.

*Lucifer.*

Who is it?

*Festus.*

I know not

Who he may be, or what; but I can guess.

*Lucifer.* Remain a moment, love, till I return.

*Elissa.* Nay—let me leave!

*Lucifer.*

Not yet: do not dislike him.

He is a friend, and more another time.

*Festus.* I am sorry, lady, to have caused this parting.  
I fear I am unwelcome.

*Elissa.*

We were parting.

*Festus.* Then am I doubly sorry; for I know  
It is the saddest and the sacredest  
Moment of all with those who love.

*Elissa.*

He is coming!

So I forgive thee.

*Lucifer.*

I must leave thee, love:

I know not for how long: it rests with thee  
If it seem long at all. Eternity  
Might pass, and I not know it in thy love.

*Elissa.* If to believe that I do love thee always  
May make time fly the fleeter—

*Lucifer.* I'll believe it—  
Trust me. I leave this lady in thy charge,  
*Festus.* Be kind—wait on her—may he, love?

*Elissa.* Thou knowest. I receive him as thy friend,  
Whenever he come.

*Festus.* I ask no higher title  
Than friend of the lovely and the generous.

*Elissa.* Farewell!

*Festus.* Lady! I will not forget my trust.  
(*Apart*) The breeze which curls the lake's bright lip but  
lifts

A purer, deeper, water to the light;  
The ruffling of the wild bird's wing but wakes  
A warmer beauty and a downier depth.  
That startled shrink, that faintest blossom-blush  
Of constancy alarmed!—Love! if thou hast  
One weapon in that shining armoury,  
The quiver on thy shoulder, where thou keep'st  
Each arrowy eye-beam feathered with a sigh;—  
If from that bow, shaped so like beauty's lip,  
Strung with its string of pearls, thou wilt twang forth  
But one dart, fair into the mark I mean,—  
Do it, and I will worship thee for ever:  
Yea, I will give thee glory and a name  
Known, sunlike, in all nations. Heart be still!

*Lucifer.* This parting over—

*Elissa.* Yes, this one—and then?

*Lucifer.* Why, then another, may be.

*Elissa.* No—no more.

I'll be unhappy if thou tell'st me so.

*Lucifer.* Well, then—no more.

*Elissa.* But when wilt thou come back?

*Lucifer.* Almost before thou wishest. He will know.

*Elissa.* I shall be always asking him.

*Lucifer.* One word

Apart with thee ere yet thou leavest. Know,  
I have with him a purpose thou mayst aid.  
Conscious though careless of the future, he  
Thou wot'st of, breathes premarked to mighty ends,  
The heir of fate; and though to states unknown,  
The destined head he lives of power mundane,  
Than grandest monarch's more. His soul, as yet  
Absorbed in love of wisdom, and his heart  
In beauty's starry smile steeped, lack the lure  
To climb ambition's heights, where yet his foot,  
Outstepping all, is due. If thou, possessed  
With aught of friendly impulse, to that end  
Couldst wake into a glow the torpid gleeds

Which wait the inspiring breath, words, as may suit,  
Of ardour or contempt—forms audible—  
Thy fealty to mewards I hold firm,—  
It will much advantage me, and mine own ends  
Advance.

*Elissa.* I doubt not, but in worthy purposes,  
One might adventure more than words; and this  
Towers on the mind more grandly, as the thought  
Is contemplated.

*Lucifer.* True. Perchance himself  
Urged warily may to thine ears confide  
The future, and success concert with thee.  
Tempt him, and he might name thee queen of earth.  
Yea, stamped by thine ascendant soul, commence  
That bright career the world awaits.

*Elissa.* And thou?  
What part hast thou in this?

*Lucifer.* A great one I,  
Though not like his.

*Elissa.* Ah, me! A second-best.

*Lucifer.* Who doeth not great things with equal ease,  
And small, doth but indifferently.

*Elissa.* We all  
Have met ere now.

*Lucifer.* My fault it shall not be  
That ye are strangers.

*Elissa.* Say for me—farewell!

*Lucifer.* Shine on, ye stars! and light her to her rest;  
Scarce are ye worthy for her handmaidens.  
Why, hell would laugh to learn I had been in love.  
As rumour through some impish spy may blab,  
And would be blind, as they oft are who laugh;  
Not seeing their own folly, nor the flaw  
Which stars their self-deceit. These twain I bring  
Together as prime factors in my sum,  
The evil most profound I can achieve—  
Earth's sudden death. Yet, through the boundless mist  
Of mockery I have played with, one bright peak,  
Sharp, solid, peers into the upper light;  
One thought of good, one seed of sacred truth,  
One priceless pearl fallen from love's fairy lips,  
Hath sunk into my soul. It irks me not,  
Though, like the projective powder of adept,  
Hell's base metallic mass it should transmute  
Into one pure and perfect orb of gold,  
The future is to be; and not as yet  
Can I be balked. Eradicated good  
Hath heretofore the aim been of my being.  
Shall I not strive to root it out then, hence?  
See which is stronger, that, or I? though helped

By all creation's wrong and wretchedness?  
 The war of good and evil narrowed here  
 To mine own spirit, it is time to force the strife.  
 All obstacles must be removed, the fates  
 Are fast maturing to their end, at once.  
 Thou seemest fixed in thought, as a star in space.  
 Hast thought of that, I whilom promised thee?

*Festus.* Soon, then soon.

My mind is now intent on other aims.

*Lucifer.* The world perhaps will hear of?

*Festus.* Ay, anon.

*Lucifer.* I have affairs in hell. Wilt go with me?

*Festus.* Yes, in a month or two:—not just this minute.

*Lucifer.* I shall be there and back again ere then.

*Festus.* Meanwhile I can amuse myself; so, go!

But some time I would fain behold thy home,  
 And pass the gates of fire.

*Lucifer.* Thou shalt, and soon.

My home is everywhere where spirit is.

*Festus.* The strongest passion which I have is honour:  
 I would I had none: it is in my way.

*Guardian Angel.* One moment, Festus; go! I follow.

*Lucifer.* Gone?

All things are as I meant them. On the ridge  
 Of ruin, how we brave it; as though one,  
 Ambitious of a seat in heaven, above  
 The cloud-encumbered pathway of the wind,  
 Should sit the tremulous bridge all-hued, which spans  
 Air's stormy realms, fate scorned. To mark an eagle,  
 Batting the sunny ceiling of the world,  
 With his dark wings, one well might deem his heart  
 On heaven; but no! it is fixed on flesh and blood;  
 And soon his talons tell it. Let me think.

*Guardian Angel.* Thy great decrees, O God of grace!  
 be given

To humblest spirits to know: too blessed if they,  
 Thy holy secrets sharing, live, depute,  
 To work thy universal will, and ground  
 In thine intents the all-embracing heavens.  
 Empowered by thee to serve thine ends divine,  
 We learn the thoughts of others; and in this wise  
 Now know I thine, O Lucifer! thy schemes  
 'Gainst God's elect, by mortal, fatal sin  
 To ruin; but the words within thy spirit,  
 Let fall by her thou once wouldst sacrifice—  
 I, and her angel here together prayed—  
 Like the atomic seed of worlds, the heart  
 And nucleus of new nature shall betimes,  
 By will of God regenerate; and all aims  
 Of creatural evil frustrate, God's sole end

## FESTUS.

...ride all bounds;  
...satisfaction close  
...—words which, truth-soul'd, have struck  
...of being; thoughts of good  
...annihilate; hopes which bear,  
...witness not to be suppressed  
...earth's immarbled sediments,  
...floods. Thou wilt not brook  
...: even this can I foresee;  
...thy first good deed, rebuking thought  
...other, shall both her and him  
...thou wouldst lure to ill, and loss of bliss,  
...and thee profit. Time, and God's high will  
...all things else educe, as writ in heaven.  
...shall know my presence ere I go.  
...I warn thee!

*Lucifer.* What! celestial friend!

What we once more?

*Guardian Angel.* At last, let mockery cease.

*Lucifer.* Let mockery cease. I have—is this not true?  
To be is something, to believe is more—  
While owning him supreme, believed his good,  
Yet bounded by mine evil?

*Guardian Angel.* O, conceit  
Most false, most fearful! How then shall he gain  
The victories he hath promised to himself,  
And all, in everlasting prophecies,  
If he subdue not evil and transform  
All ill to good? That were a victory vast,  
And of none other hand achievable;  
Worthy indeed of God.

*Lucifer.* This sole I see;  
All evil I must elaborate to the end,  
Both in this mortal and myself. Meanwhile  
Can I not, in his heart—bad, base return  
True, for that late to me vouchsafed,—one thought  
Evil, one wild desire, instil; of soul  
Perilous, if ruinous not? 'Gainst both, in sooth,  
Must I take arms; as the audacious main  
Combats twin elements at once, the land  
Lashing with breakers, while with clouded foam,  
The neutral air intimidate, he invades.  
But dare I meet the fate mysterious, now  
Threatened, or promised is't? awaits me? Well;  
It recks not. I can brave it to the last.

*Guardian Angel.* My lips are sealed, mine eyes.

*Lucifer.* Mine, too. Around  
The cavèd heavens I grope, nor see escape;  
This everlasting vault, these tombing skies.

## XXVI.

Hearts, like moons,  
 Mature apace ; and while one half the world  
 Is busy, and one half dreaming, Passion's path  
 Is miled of perilous ventures scarcely 'scaped  
 By sheer precipitancy, as ice unsafe  
 Oft rends not till we are sped. Pity the fair  
 Embodiment of thrice passionate love, by man  
 From his fiend friend won ; the lure yet laid of power,  
 Ambition's highest to attract, learn, justly fails ;  
 Nor less the false solution this would seek  
 Of selfish luxury, and a life unlaured  
 By relevance to the eternal, and its dues.  
 Thus wiled, lo ! life's defeat we fame ; with cups  
 Of air inebriate, or more substandard, drain  
 Deceived, the wine of our own death-feast ; plot,  
 Ravenous of doom, self-ruin ; but this withheld.  
 See wars of soul with soul that but half-won  
 Half lost on either side feints prove contrived,  
 By the bad spirit's means for his own worst ends :  
 Whom we know not when come ; so dark we grow.

*Mansion overlooking the Sea. Interior. A Drawing-room.*

FESTUS and ELISSA. GUARDIAN ANGEL. LUCIFER.

*Festus.* Who says he loves and is not wretched, lies.  
 Or that love is madness, mad from his mother came.  
 It is the most reasonable thing in nature.  
 What can we do but love ? It is our cup ;  
 Our fine, our passion. In heaven's name, Elissa !  
 What was it made us love ?

*Elissa.* I know not, what ?  
 I am not happy. I have wept all day.

*Festus.* It was thine own fault. What wouldst thou  
 have of me ?  
 I tell thee we must—no : I cannot tell thee.  
 I cannot brook those tears. Thou knowest I love thee,  
 Worship thee ; oh it's a world more than worship,  
 The cold obedience given to God. Elissa,  
 Turn towards me thy fair brow.

*Elissa.* Nay, let me weep.

*Festus.* Thou hadst no need, no call, no cause to have  
 loved me.  
 One was, who well loved thee.

*Elissa.* I could not help  
 His loving me ; nor, woe is me ! prevent  
 My loving thee. Alas ! it is our fate.

*Festus.* Then fate hath fee'd the passion for our end ;  
 And we are sold to ruin.

*Elissa.* Then we will die  
 Together ; quit together body and life ;  
 But while I live, none can I love but thee.

Look at me ; heart and arms, I am thine own ;  
 Have been, must be. Oh ! I was happy once ;  
 Ere I knew thee. And thou, why wast thou kind  
 To me, kind cruelly, or this had not been  
 Ever. But now, be cruel, if thou wilt.  
 Hate me, still I am thine ; disown me, thine ;  
 Desert me, no thou canst not. Look at me,  
 I am half blind with weeping, and mine eyes  
 Have scarce a tear left in them, for I yet  
 Dread how 'twill end. Thou wilt leave me, leave me, lone,  
 Loveless, forgot.

*Festus.* Nay, if we are given to forge  
 Adventures, let it be so. Say, we part.  
 Say, we must part. Think that I come again.

*Elissa.* Not be again with thee, nor thou with me !  
 It is too much. Let me go mad, or die.

*Festus.* Live mine, Elissa ; and I will ever love thee.

*Elissa.* Wilt thou ? Oh make me happy. Say it again.  
 I cannot know too often of my bliss.

*Festus (apart).* As shakes the continent 'neath the solid  
 fall

Of mighty stream, lake-gorged, appalling air,  
 Thought wildering, so my heart by passion's force  
 Stunned, rests nor night nor day, but rocks with one  
 Ceaseless vibration. Does the very air  
 Whisper forbiddance to my will ?

*Guardian Angel.* O soul,  
 Be wise ! The vast invisible witness all  
 Beholds.

*Elissa.* But say, dost love me ? wilt thou love me ?

*Festus.* Since I have known thee I have done nought  
 else.

All hours not spent with thee are blanks between stars.  
 Love thee ? I love thee madly. Thou hast drained,  
 Of all its love, mine heart. It will empty be  
 To aught after thee. Ay, now relume thine eyes,  
 Those eyes that might a moment win the glance  
 Of any seraph gazing not the throne.

*Elissa.* No wonder thine. What ! tears ! 'Tis thy  
 turn now.

Sad formulary with me of speechless grief !  
 One retributive tear is there. Nay, why ?

*Festus.* 'Tis strange, 'tis startling, is the first hot tear  
 We have shed, may be for years ; and which hath lain  
 Like a water-fairy in the eye's blue depths,  
 Spell-bound ; death freed it not ; pain, not ; nor shame ;  
 Nor penitence, nor much pity, nor despair ;  
 What else but love could ? For a fearful time  
 We can keep down the floodgates of the heart,  
 But somehow we must draw them, or it will burst

Like sand, this brave embankment of the breast,  
And drain itself to dry death. When pride thaws,  
Look for floods. I have that in thought that sets  
Between me and the world a bar, no power  
Can loose.

*Elissa.* What thought? Our time may soon be over.

*Festus.* I cannot think of time; there is no time.  
Time, time, I hate thee with the hate of hell  
For aught that's good, but thou art infamous.  
I will give thee half mine immortality  
To keep back one for an hour. Leave me to-night,  
And wither me to-morrow like a weed.

*Elissa.* Where is he now?

*Festus.* In Hades, hope!

*Elissa.* What mean'st thou?  
He wronged thee never. Say, when cometh he?

*Festus.* To-night.

*Elissa.* He comes to sever us like fate.  
But shall he part us?

*Festus.* Never. Let him part  
The sun in twain first.

*Elissa.* Now, would I, he came  
Right speedily, for it frets me until freed  
Frankly, from all allegiance.

*Festus.* See him not,  
He will re-lure thy spirit with vain deceits;  
Or try. No, hence with me. Trust me. Away,  
Ere he come.

*Elissa.* I may not. It was ever thus;  
I am born to make unhappy all around me.

*Festus.* Of thy being wrong I will not hear; it is I;  
I am the false usurper. And since one  
Must be a sacrifice, be it me.

*Elissa.* Thou swarest,  
Even now to love me ever!

*Festus.* Be it so.  
I have sworn, and now and then I keep my oath;  
I will not give thee up.

*Elissa.* We have been too happy.  
We might have known woe follows bliss as close  
As death, life.

*Festus.* Ah! how cold thy hand is. Here,  
Warm it upon my heart. Nay, let it be.  
The hand that is on the heart is on the soul.  
And it is thus some moments take the heart,  
Life's wheel, and steer us through eternity.

*Elissa.* Loose, now, my hand.

*Festus.* Look beautiful on me then!  
Speak to me. Keep my name upon thy lips,  
Steeped in their roseate dew, lips sacred aye

To the word that shall be ; and the unexpressed sweets  
 Of possible music ; hither turn those eyes,  
 Within whose depths one streaming star, the soul's  
 Ascendant, radiant rules, that mine may share  
 Their dear translated light ; that cheek, just tinged  
 As with the visible echo of a blush ;  
 Pale as the sumptuous bosom'd rose, which, save  
 For its heart, might vie with snow ; that crescent brow  
 Beaming with soul-light, oh, incline to mine.  
 Nay, do not weep. We never trust your tears.  
 Tears, even as spirits within a magic glass,  
 Upon practised witchery, wait on woman's will.

*Elissa.* Wrong me not thus. The end of love is woe ;  
 And of woe, death, and of death, death alone.  
 And there is no redemption for the heart.

*Festus.* Love hath no end except itself. We only  
 Felt we loved, and were happy.

*Elissa.* Ah, it was so.  
 Our sole misfortune is, we have been happy.  
 We never shall be happy here again.

*Festus.* Nay, say not so. Let us be happy, now.  
 Happy ? To fling aside thy wavy locks,  
 And feed upon thy white brow mine eyes ; to look  
 Deep into thine, till mine I feel have drank  
 Full of that soft wet fire which floats in them ;  
 Eyes I would never leave, yet when most near  
 Then, most astray, I ; nay, but to glance, as one  
 Who hath eyed the inconceivable forms on high,—  
 Where midst upon the beauty of thy breast  
 Sits Love, like one between the cherubim ;  
 To name thee, dream thee, but one moment mine  
 Delights me more than all that earth can lend  
 The good or bad, or heaven—

*Elissa.* Oh name not heaven !  
 With thoughts so foolish and so wrong.

*Festus.* What's wrong ?  
 Shall my blood never bound 'neath beauty's touch,  
 Heart throb, nor eye thaw with hers when her tears  
 Drop quick and bright upon the glowing brow  
 Bowed at her feet, because, forsooth, it is wrong ?  
 Let it be wrong, it is wrong, it is wretchedness,  
 I seek to suffer.

*Elissa.* Nay, be calm. I never  
 So love thee as when calm. Even then, 'tis strange !  
 How dare we love each other as we do !

*Festus.* Give me some wine ; more wine. It pleasures  
 me  
 One's blood to impurple with the pall-black wine  
 Of southern slopes, where years ago this grape  
 Clustered mayhap o'erhead, and my brow screened

With the strong dark shadows cast by lustier suns.  
Good, now. It feeds my will. And I have plans,  
Oh, plans ! 'twould take a realm to execute.

*Elissa.* Drink ; but the vintage of a hundred years  
Would never slake shame's memory, heed thou well,  
Nor quench the thirst of folly.

*Festus.* Fill again,  
My beauty. Sing to me and make me glad.  
Thy sweet words drop as softly upon the ear  
As rose leaves on a well ; and I could listen,  
As though the immortal melodies of heaven  
Were wrought into one word, that word a whisper,  
That whisper all I would from all I love.

*Elissa.* I am not happy ; cannot sing. Thou lookest  
Happy. Would I were !

*Festus.* The sun's body, they say,  
Is dark, hard, hollow ; light but a floating fluid  
Veiling him.

*Elissa.* Ah ! how truly like man's heart ;  
Most when, self-hid in passion's bright disguise,  
Fraudful.

*Festus.* Dost moralize ? Oh, I'm with thee, there !

*Servant, entering.* A singer told to come is here.

*Festus.* Wilt hear him ?

*Elissa.* Gladly, love. Bid him enter.

*Festus.* What hast there ?

*Singer.* Oh, everything, I think.

*Festus.* Well anything

Will serve, this once.

*Singer.* The last new song ?

*Festus.* Begin.

*Singer.* Oh ! let not a lovely form  
With feeling fill thine eye ;  
Oh ! let not the bosom warm  
At love-lorn lady's sigh ;  
For how false is the fairest breast ;  
How little worth, if true ;  
And who would wish possessed,  
What all must scorn or rue ?  
Then pass by beauty with looks above ;  
Oh ! seek never—share never—woman's love !

Oh ! let not a planet-like eye  
Imbeam its tale on thine ;  
In truth 'tis a lie—though a lie  
Scarce less than truth divine.  
And the light of its look on the young  
Is wildfire with the soul ;  
Ye follow and follow it long,  
But find nor good nor goal.  
Then pass by beauty with looks above ;  
Oh ! seek never—share never—woman's love !

*Elissa.* Methinks I must have heard that voice before.



## FESTUS.

*Festus.* And I, though I forget me where.

*Elissa.*

I, too.

*Singer.* Oh ! let not a wildering tongue  
Weave bright webs o'er thine ear ;  
Nor thy spirit be said nor sung  
To the air of smile or tear.  
And say it hath melody far  
More than the spheres of heaven,  
Though to man and the morning star  
They sang, Ye be forgiven !  
Yet pass by beauty with looks above ;  
Oh ! seek never—share never—woman's love !

Oh ! let not a soft bosom pour  
Itself in thine ! It is vain.  
Love cheateth the heart, oh ! be sure,  
Worse even than wine the brain.  
Then snatch up thy soul from his snare,  
Ere e'en from the goblet's brim,  
Thy lip ; for the wise declare,  
There is none that can blind like him.  
Then pass by beauty with looks above ;  
Oh ! seek never—share never—woman's love !

*Festus.* Come hither, I would look on thee. I have seen  
Some one much like thee.

*Elissa.* It was a brother, maybe ?

*Singer.* I have none, lady.

*Festus.* Go ; but leave your song.

*Elissa.* Go not as yet. Even yon unfolding door  
Hath cleared the sultry-passion'd air, which hangs  
Heavy as with idolatrous incense. Wait.  
There was a steadying coolness of the stars  
Came with those footsteps. Stay !—Again, I prithee.

*Festus.* Sing something burning, passionate, and sweet.  
For oh ! I am in the mood to realize  
All deep and dear enjoyment. Trill away,  
The lilt perchance may dovetail with the time.

*Singer.* Thou art for happiness with me.  
Love, love me as thou wilt !  
I care not, so I live with thee,  
For goodness or for guilt.  
I leave repentance to the weak,  
And to the good all gladness :  
I only feel, that while I speak,  
Reason to me seems madness.

This heart at once went wild for thee,  
While yet thou wert not mine ;  
And now thine eye is law to me—  
Law human and divine.  
I leave despair to all who fail,  
Who love and lose thee, sadness ;  
For what 'gainst beauty can avail,  
Which, moon-like, maketh madness ?

Is this sufficient ?

*Festus.* Ample, excellent.  
His words perplex me not a little. But now  
Bid him depart.

*Elissa.* Let fate fulfil itself.

*Servant.* Here, follow me.

*Singer.* Soft, friend. Await me here,  
While I assort my ditties, and concert  
What on re-entry may be just.

*Servant.* Art bidden  
To reappear ?

*Singer.* Truth, I may be recalled.

*Elissa.* How is't my heart misgives me so ? How is't  
I long, yet dread, to meet this regent once,  
Now outcast, of my spirit ? How break to him  
That change which o'er the firmament of my life  
Hath swept, and stormily even now, where once,  
Calm homed. Alas for me ! Thou knowst not, thou  
Though dear, my troubles.

*Festus.* Weeping again, my love ?  
Thou art by turns the proudest, humblest, creature  
Earth owns. The least thing, now, dints thy soft heart ;  
Now, thou couldst face unblenched, a menacing world.  
Oh, if to say I love laid all the sins  
Of all the worlds on me I'd say it, still.

*Elissa.* If love be blind, it must be by his tears :  
For love and sorrow alway come together,  
Love with his sister, Sorrow, by the hand.

*Festus.* Nay, I will conquer thee again to smile,  
To jet forth thy soul's radiance, once again,  
Or lose my right to love thee. Let me kneel.  
Come ! I will have no other gods but thee ;  
To none but thee will I bow down and worship.  
Thy bosom be mine altar, and thine eyes  
Stars manifestive that lead me hourly on  
To the shrine of thy divinity. Shine ! Appear !  
Oh cruel as the week-day gods of old  
Wilt thou have human victims ? Not content  
With fire and water, kisses, tears, is't thou  
Wilt have life's subtler element ? must needs  
On immortality feast ? Here, take me, then ;  
I offer up myself, in sacrifice,  
To thee.

*Elissa.* Where will thy passionate folly end ?  
I love thee.

*Festus.* I conjure thee, let me swear  
By some sweet oath that shall to both be holy,  
By arms which hold ; by knees which worship thee ;  
By that dark eye, the dark divine of beauty,  
Yet trembling o'er its lid all tears and light ;  
Glory, and eye of eyes which yet have shone ;

By this lone heart which longeth for a mate ;  
 By love's sweet will and sweeter way, by all  
 I love, by thyself, myself, let me, let me,  
 Let me,—but draw the lightnings from thine eye ;  
 Kisses be my conductors ; do not frown ;  
 Nor look so temptingly angry. I was but trifling.  
 The cold, calm kiss which cometh as an alms  
 Not a necessity is not for me,  
 Whose bliss, whose woe, whose life, whose all is love.

*Elissa.* We both wrong whom we love, love whom we  
 wrong.

*Festus.* But I am even as a dog that fondles o'er,  
 And licks the wound he dies of. Would I could  
 Create or suffer within myself enough  
 Of love to kill.

*Elissa.* Thou lovest one whom, maybe,  
 Thou oughtst not to have loved.

*Festus.* Love hath its own  
 Belief, own worship, own morality,  
 Own laws. It were better that all love were sin  
 Than that love were not. By-laws it must have,  
 Exceptions to earth's rules, and heaven's, not meaning  
 The good it doth, nor ill.

*Elissa.* Oh, plead not thus ;  
 It is wrong, it is unjust, unkind.

*Festus.* It is.  
 But I am half mad and half dead with it.  
 I have loved thee till I can love nought beside.  
 My heart is drenched with love, as with a cloud  
 A sky aspiring hill. So much I have  
 Of lifefulness I seem to o'erlive myself.  
 I hate all things but thee ; shun men like snakes ;  
 Women, like pits. To me thou art all woman,  
 All life, all love, and more than all my kind.  
 I love thee more than I shall love and look for  
 Death, dare he take thee from me. But who dreams  
 Of death and thee together ?

*Elissa.* I dream so, not  
 Rarely ; and know not but that now and again,  
 I would such dreams were verified. The best  
 Of all things are dreams realized.

*Festus.* Ah me !  
 Dreams such as gods may dream thy soul possess  
 For aye i' the Hadean Eden, death ; but here,  
 Me bless with love's divine reality.  
 So live we ever ; thou in thyself, with me  
 Happy ; and I of thee all wise, all blessed.  
 I have gone round the compass of all life  
 And can find nought worthy of thee. I but feel  
 That were I, as I ought to be, a god

I would sacrifice to thee the sun, in bright  
And burning honour of thy love; proof sought  
Of mine oblation's worthfulness; for know,  
Miracles are not miracles with gods.

*Elissa.* Dearer thou canst not be to me, unless  
I die in telling how dear.

*Festus.* Mine! be mine!  
My soul is stung with thy beauty to the quick.  
Oh but thou art too good or else too bad;  
Be colder or be warmer.

*Elissa.* Leave me.

*Festus.* Well  
It is most cruel, first to light the heart  
With love completely, boundlessly; and then,  
Moonlike, slowly to edge aside, and leave  
One only little line of all so bright,  
Once; teach and unteach; nay, to use more arts  
Than would outdo the devil of his throne,  
To make us ignorant of all we know;  
To take the heart to pieces carefully;  
For it is love alone can build the heart;  
To root the tree up, 'neath whose shade we have lived,  
And give us back a sliver. Let it die.

*Guardian Angel.* Thus dares he brave fate's end.

With her to reign  
Forbid, he would drive dominion from his mind,  
As drives the wind some day-besetting cloud  
Though ne'er so grand and gorgeous, down the skies,  
So he might soothe his heart with this new love  
And rest in peace. False peace! not thus grants Heaven.  
She only shares pride's seat, pride banned—whose soul  
Turned prayerful Godwards, power can sanctify  
By teaching rule to serve. Haste, heaven, the hour.

*Elissa.* Hark, he is coming.

*Festus.* Who is coming?

*Elissa.* He

Thou knowst, I wait for.

*Festus.* No! he cannot come;  
For I have driven an oath into his heart,  
And hanged a curse about his neck, might sink  
The Prince of Air to the centre.

*Elissa.* But thou saidst  
He was to come, and at fixed time.

*Festus.* I said so?  
I'm, sure, bewildered. Time it is indeed  
To do what most I am here to do.

*Guardian Angel.* Beware!  
Oh! I beseech thee. Nay, he hears me not,  
More than 'mid foamy turmoil of a sea  
Storm-lashed is heard the sigh of land-locked gale,  
State-severed, hid in continents.

*Festus.*

All concurs.

With what malefic providence, will men say,  
 Success hath covenanted with wrong. The hour  
 Burns as it passes o'er me with a wing  
 Stifling of fire, till all's done; and we here  
 Enjoy perfection. Have, have, cries a voice,  
 As of a crowd within me. All one's life  
 Lies past the vast horizon there, unseen,  
 But must be sought and had. I would do aught  
 To throw this dark desire which wrestles with me.  
 It answers not to hold it at arm's length.  
 It must be hurled, dashed, trampled down, or see  
 It soars, and all subdues. O lady, hear!  
 Never did angel love his heaven, nor king  
 Crown, as I thee. As some fire-hearted star,  
 By beauteousness of sister sphere allured,  
 His ancient seat mid everlasting space,  
 And self-sufficing harmonies quits, to round  
 The idol orb, ceaseless, and to hers add  
 His pomp of light subservient, nor would leave  
 Such luminous vortex, but the unlidded eye  
 Burns to her always,—I for thee, most fair!  
 Mind's self rule, earth's forego; nor other end  
 Seek than thyself.

*Elissa.*

But to what end? The world  
 Is ripening with the plans thyself hast sown,  
 And waits its reaper. Would not earth contend?

*Festus.*

Let others notions fit them to our need.  
 I have effaced my nature in the hope  
 To conciliate love with fate. In vain! As might  
 One resolute to die, the shore sought, cry  
 To the wide embattled wave whose twin white arms,  
 And stretched out fingers, streamy with latent light,  
 All things before them conquering, at last, close,  
 Arched like the bow of death, resplendent, 'Come,  
 Wreck me with thine embrace, it is my doom.'  
 So, to thy destinative hands, my brow  
 Now circling as a moveable aureole, I  
 My spirit reserveless trust.

*Elissa.*

See, now, the moon,  
 As one whose soul, sole conversant with heaven,  
 But by immortal memories saddened, still  
 Considers silently the excuseful mirth  
 Of wavelets in their twinkling play, and dance  
 Of even the eternal elements, which will take  
 Now, and once more their pleasure.

*Festus.*

Oh! far off!

That everlasting shimmering; 'tis indeed  
 Too notable; and anon—

*Elissa.*

Yon fountain's fall!

How sweetly it lulls the ear, and ringed in groves  
Of fragrant fruitage, and by showers suspense  
And permanent of the myrtle's pearly stars  
Shocks not with love's own murmured words.

*Festus.*

Peace, peace!

I cannot grant tame audience, thou with me,  
To outward nature.

*Elissa.*

Think then of thine own.

Nay, let me look then on the impassive hills,  
Their swell unchangeful, stirless rise and fall;  
The sea is all too mutable, and the moon.  
I breathe now, 'neath this trellis.

*Festus.*

Breathe, and know

The might and truth of hearts is ne'er so shown  
As in loving those we ought not, may be, love;  
Or cannot have.

*Elissa.*

Let me not wrong thee, Festus.

Let me not think I have thought too well of thee;  
And that to rebel 'gainst thee were heaven to obey.  
What is't thou meditatest? Hast aught conceived  
Would contrary God's ends? and edge aside  
Thy path from duty and destiny?

*Festus.*

I am here

To act, not ask, nor answer; to myself  
I am henceforth sole responsible.

*Elissa.*

Alas!

I do begin to fear thee.

*Festus.*

That were well.

*Elissa.* Wouldst thou God's law and man's evade?

Then know,

I cannot fly the world; more than defy  
Earth's bodily gravity; still less wouldst thou deem  
Soul to disconsecrate?

*Festus.*

Not a moment. Not

One spot thy shadow hallows. But these climes!  
This plot of earth is all too mean, too tame,  
Too moderate in its temperament; its range  
Of act too average; nor enough profound  
Its total rest. I love the pitiless sun;  
Soil that reeks high with rankest fruitfulness;  
Law such as lurks in storms; each day a day  
(Of history; and a sleep lawn-pillowed, now  
'Neath moonlight, now in savage sun-blaze trapped;  
Half down some steep ravine, safe hutted; lulled  
By boom of waters, black with molten snows;  
The passionate lands where women live to love,  
And men 'twixt war and worship halve their days.

*Elissa.* Is't thou sayst war?

*Festus.*

I prate not now of peace.

I reckon not were the world all war, and thou

Queen of the south to head a hemisphere  
 Of foes against me challenging so the throne  
 Of a plight orb, I'd care not. Thee to bind  
 In bands of love triumphant, 'twere enough  
 For me the great tradition's sum and close.

*Elissa.* What dreadful words are these! What change  
 hast thou,  
 Change utter and unutterable, endured  
 In spirit, who once wert most humane of men  
 Not manwards sole, but towards all life. Be calm.  
 Truth, thou affrightest me.

*Festus.* Oh, I am calm,  
 As husbandman when midst the harvest field  
 And the soft shadelets thrown by autumnal moons  
 From sheaf and shock, he eyes the upbuilded wealth,  
 Builded breast high, shake to his passing foot,  
 Anticipative of whitest wealth. Nay, see;  
 Calm as the heartiest circlet of a wheel  
 Whose visible movement's lost, to myself I seem  
 Still absolutely. Oh feel my pulse; I'm calm;  
 Breathless.

*Elissa.* We trifle.

*Festus.* Trifle then no more.  
 Let us away, away! Yon innocent moon  
 Sacred, sequestrate, virgin of the skies,  
 Us following with her patient power shall tend  
 Our homeward track nor leave us till we reach  
 With thy fair following, holiest peace.

*Elissa.* I cannot.

*Festus.* Oh say not so. Slay me at once, I die.  
 I look upon thy beauty, and forget,  
 As in a dream of drowning all things else.  
 Right, wrong, seem one, seem nothing. Thou art beauty;  
 That beauty everything. Speak not. It may be  
 I shall look on thee as looks the sun on earth,  
 Until like him I gaze myself away  
 From heaven. But if thou wouldst I look no longer,  
 Change then the action of thy loveliness,  
 Lest long same-seemingness should send me mad.  
 Blind me with kisses. I would ruin sight,  
 To give its virtue to those lips whereon  
 I would die now or ever live. Away!  
 For as wearied wanderer snow-blinded, sinks,  
 And swoons upon the swelling drift and dies;  
 So on that dazzling bosom would I lay  
 These famished lips, and end their wanderings there.  
 Come, let us balk the future of its end  
 Hoped for, feared by some. Oh! I'll be all  
 Thou ask'st for in the coming, placable, calm,  
 Most moderate, most amenable to right;  
 But know the present pressant! know, I still

Am earnest, still resolved ; and shall I now  
 For scare of covetise, and the curt commands  
 Of law, whose thunderous negatives awe the world,  
 And pale the lips of weekly posturists,  
 Shall I cheat thee, bonny heart of mine, of this  
 Thy long expected spoil ? No, minion, no !  
 But if meanwhile thy word hope certify  
 With promise of thyself ;—what ! not appeased ?  
 Nay, rage not, dove of mine !—ferocious dove !

*Elissa.* Be as thou wert. What will become of us ?

*Festus.* Be mine, be me, be aught but so far from me.  
 Let us from hence. The south expects our feet  
 With tremulous burnings. Winds await our flight,  
 Breathless, till hailed. My heart is numb with ire  
 Of love. I rage to be with thee where none  
 Can eye or awe us, of the incarnate world.  
 All nature waits our will, all skill of art.  
 Our sloop in moonshade hid, beyond yon crag,  
 Impatient, rocks from head to heel, to hear  
 One footstep crash the beach ! For thy dear sake,  
 The world may go a begging for a king.  
 And say, we jilt our destiny, and so void  
 Their ends who would foreclose earth's leading life ;  
 What ail we ? length of rapturous days our own,  
 And respited humanity ? It were something  
 Both earth and heaven, hell aidant, to defeat ;  
 Defeat the stars 'gainst us concoursed.

*Elissa.* Alas !

Alas ! I dread thee now.

*Festus.* Nay, fear not me.  
 Whither we wend, once there, while earth attends  
 The marvellous rumour, blessings not, nor banns  
 Shall lack, nor unspanned leisure ; quashed all hopes  
 Of abnegated empire, what shall be  
 Ours, but love boundless, sateless ?

*Elissa.* Listen !

*Festus.* No !

I list to no conditions, here nor now.  
 Give me thyself. Rise, come with me, with me !  
 Surely, some whirlwind waits to lackey us hence !

*Guardian Angel.* Where art thou, Lucifer ? Part them !

*Lucifer.* Is't my part

To order, or hinder fate ? As yet, let be.

*Festus.* Far off, on the obscure disk of earth, is mine  
 Originally by sword-right of my sires,  
 Upon a mountain spur which dips its foot  
 Death-deep in the sea, a stern stronghold, that boasts,  
 In ruinous luxury, still sufficing state,  
 An exiled tyrant liberally to guest,  
 And all his wastrel court ; high peaked, far back

SNOWS everduring blanch ; below, thick woods  
 Lush leaved, broad fanned, fruit breedful, stretch ; and there,  
 All night around the crowns of favourite palms,  
 Their winged and intricate reel, the fireflies,—sparks  
 Vivid, as 'twere of life's divinity, weave,  
 Mocking the star-maze ; and in rapid act  
 Of light, self regulative, law heed nor need,  
 Being of surpassing nature ; there, too, pour,  
 From their encoigning huts, leaf-roofed, when dews  
 And shadows thicken at mid-moon, for dance,  
 Feastful, hot-breath'd, the lithe and dusky array  
 Who call me master, adulative, and mouth  
 Maybe a common creed ; but coyly, adore,  
 Some uncouth idolet to their glebe adstrict,  
 With whom I have whiles done battle ; there, with me,  
 Most excellentest of things, be thou their pride,  
 Their providence, their supreme ! Nay, linger not,  
 See, all the way is water. Moons but three  
 Shall waste their light upon our flamy wake,  
 Ere we are there : there rest in lavish peace  
 And pall-less pleasures. Oh it is not for me  
 Enough to have gazed and doted on thee until  
 Mine eye is dazzled, and brain dizzied. Thou  
 All worship must exhaust ; it is not enough  
 That in long dreams my soul hath torrent-like,  
 Swept this majestic make ; nor, that it now  
 Fails in the sight of heaven and thee, nay, falls  
 As a summer sunset, seawards, hot and tired  
 With the o'erlong day, that slowly degrades itself  
 Of absolute beauty to a noteless mass  
 Uncomeliest of all things—reck I. The cost,  
 The fine, I have summed, and yet have sworn to fill,  
 Sometime, mine arms with bliss.

*Elissa.*

Sit, Festus!

*Lucifer.*

Friends !

Did ye not know me ? No ! Then know me now.

*Elissa.* It was he.

*Festus.*

Thou—

*Lucifer.* Hush ; thou art not to utter what  
 I am. Bethink thee : it was our covenant.

*Guardian Angel.* Man from thyself saved although as  
 'gainst thy will,

Give thanks thou mayst for life snatched from remorse,  
 And sin's soul-blinding sophistries : and learn  
 How even by the hands of evil God worketh good,  
 Nor dream his fates can fail, or plans succeed  
 Without his part of the fortune.

*Festus.*

I, content,

Submit me to the award of God.

*Guardian Angel.*

Farewell.

*Lucifer.* Thee, lady, said I, once, I again would see.

*Elissa.* Thou didst, and I must thank thee. Waiting  
here

Thy visit, all uncharmed by the ripple of seas  
On summer eve, moonlit, 'twere well I staid  
To render back to thee my troth, or one,  
Too daring thoughtless, would have borne me off  
Whither I know not, might have smirched a name  
Though meaning not, that shall be stainless still.  
'Twas wrong, but I forgive. He hears me not.

*Lucifer.* I hear. Thou knowest what once I was to thee  
One who for love of one I loved, for thee,  
Would have done or borne the sins of all the world ;  
Who did thy bidding at thy lightest look  
And had it been to have snatched an angel's crown,  
Off his bright brow, as he sate singing, throned,  
I would have cut these heart strings that tie down  
My spirit, and spite of thunder and sacrilege,  
Had laid it at thy feet. I loved thee, lady.  
I am one whose love was greater than the world's,  
And might have vied with God's ; a boundless ring  
All pressing upon one point, that point thy heart.  
And now, but should I call on my revenge ;  
It were at hand in armies. But thou art woman ;  
And I forget my purpose and my wrongs  
In looking, and in loving.

*Elissa.* Was it sin  
To have loved once ignorantly ?

*Lucifer.* Oh, hear her heaven.  
There is no blasphemy in love, but doubt ;  
No sin but to deceive.

*Festus.* Then is she sinless.  
Thy heart's embrace though close was snakelike cold.  
And mine was warm, and more, was welcome.

*Lucifer.* Patience ;  
Of thee I spake not, cared not, thought not, I.  
Be sure, it was not from reverence for thee,  
I saved ye, but for her sake and mine own.  
I have excused so much there is little left  
To make more words about ; but, for the future,  
I would almost vow, so variable it seems,  
It were as well expect to entice a star  
To perch upon one's finger, or the wind  
To follow one like a dog, as think to fix  
To aught a woman's heart. Answer me not.  
Let me say what I have to say, and go.  
Thou art all will and passion, that is thine  
Excuse and condemnation.

*Elissa.* While that will  
Was turned towards thee, thou saw 'st in it no harm.

*Lucifer.* Oh I have heard what rather than have heard  
I would have stopped mine ears with thunder ; words  
That have gone singing through my soul, as arrows  
Through the air, their death-song.

*Elissa.* Not from me expect  
Defence, nor accusation. Both I scorn.

*Lucifer.* Now, let us part, or I shall die of wrath.

*Elissa.* Part then.

*Lucifer.* Thank God it is for eternity.

*Elissa.* I do. Away.

*Lucifer.* Festus, I wait for thee.  
I have fulfilled the word between us passed  
So far as is permitted me. Look back !  
There is little unaccomplished.

*Festus.* One thing yet.

*Lucifer.* And that mayhap anon. Wouldst rather power  
To sow in millions or in units reap ?

*Festus.* Spirit, beyond compute, beyond compare,  
Both I must have.

*Lucifer.* So then, this womanish love,  
Brain-feebling, heart unmanning sentiment,  
Must be put by, which is to neither gain,  
Honour, nor need nor meed. Enough of love.  
True, it hath served a purpose with myself ;  
Although constrained the very end to avert  
All forecast had led up to. Nor in this  
Seemed I myself quite, but as urged by power  
Unseen, resistless.

*Festus.* Well, I will think of it.

*Lucifer.* It is thought and done with. Soon, 'twill  
lead thee whither  
Thou shalt behold more marvels than man e'er  
Hath known ; perceive earth spirit-wise, and know  
All nature tributary.

*Festus.* 'Twere well ; in time.

*Lucifer.* Said I, in this strange deed, I to myself  
Seemed not myself, quite ? But though baffled here,  
By what a good deed seems, one cipher less  
In the great evil's boundless deficiency,  
It were base to flee the field, one chance yet left.  
If in the lure of power, my next, he fail  
Self-magnifying, he forfeits all.

*Festus.* But now,—  
And come ! thou art not the first deceived in love ;  
Yet is not love so much love as a dream  
Of madness, whence we wake, scared and astound  
To find that what we have loved, must love, is not  
That we had meant to love ; and all we deemed  
To be, proves nought ;—from each, like guerdon reaped.

*Lucifer.* Well, doubtless well.

*Festus.* Perhaps I profit ed

Too much by thy good lessons.

*Lucifer.* Lady, ere  
I hence, grant yet one favour. Take this rose  
Fresh from its parent stem ; make much of it ;  
And as it fades, let all remembrance fade  
Of him who gave.

*Elissa.* I cast it down at once.  
The eagle needs no omens who to all  
Himself is ominous ; and not with me  
Shall memory, like a whirlpool 'neath a fall,  
Whose watery resurrection scares the bold,  
Revolve the mangled moments of the passed  
In wearisome dissolution : no ! at once—

*Lucifer.* The furies hint it, let the fates advise.  
Take heed. A nobler life may sometime cross  
The path of spirit perplexed, intempested ;  
Inexorable ; and like that—

*Festus.* Go. I follow.

*Lucifer.* Now therefore would I wager, and I might  
The great archangel's trump to a dog-whistle  
That whatsoever happens, worse ensues.

*Festus.* Even the unwise may prophesy, now and then.  
Forgive, love, him ; and me forgive for all.

*Elissa.* Yes, I forgive. What is there not and whom  
That I forgive not ? Let me be forgiven  
By the Great Spirit in death as I, in life,  
Pardon who would me wrong, if such soul live.  
The love which giveth all, forgiveth aught.  
And thou to me art more than earth or heaven.  
They have but given me life, thou gavest love ;  
The lord of life, thou my life, love, and lord.  
Take me again, my kindest, dearest, best.  
Him who hath gone I never loved like thee.  
Was in his eye a desolation, seemed  
To prey upon all the light, whate'er, in mine.  
But it is passed ; and he with it. I think  
I know, thou lovest me.

*Festus.* And I think, as now,  
For perfect love there should be but one god,  
One worshipper.

*Elissa.* We know the gods of old  
Worshipped each other, equal deities.  
For the poets surely spake the truth of gods  
Who dare not speak but truth.

*Festus.* O breathing beauty !  
Bards seek ideally, dost believe the gods  
Of old, toys, terrors, of an infant world ?

*Elissa.* If I do not believe, I scorn them not.  
Nay, I could mourn for them and pray for them.  
I can scorn nought a nation's honest heart  
Hath held for ages holy : for the heart

Is alike holy in its strength and weakness.  
 All things to me are sacred that have been ;  
 And though earth, like a stream, blood-streaked, which tells  
 A long and silent tale of wrongful death,  
 May mostly, blush her history, and her eyes  
 Hide, yet the passed is sacred ; it is God's ;  
 Not ours ; let her, let us, do better, now.

*Festus.* O re-inspired, retowered in spirit, arise ;  
 Go mate thee with the stars ; thou art not made  
 For mortal 'spousals. Tears all gone, all dread.  
 All dubiousness, beams forth thy soul again.  
 Lo ! there are veins of diamonds in thine eyes,  
 Might furnish crowns for all the queens of earth.  
 Oh ! I could sooner price the sun, than set  
 A value earth could pay, upon thy look.  
 Look ! I would rather look upon thee one minute,  
 Than a whole day on Paradise ;—such days  
 As are, and only, in heaven. But now I have seen  
 Fate's all compelling nod, and must away.  
 What wilt thou ? Is there aught dost fear ?

*Elissa.* I dread  
 But too long separation ; nothing else.

*Festus.* Would I could more assure thee than by words.

*Elissa.* When heaven and earth were first betrothed,  
 they brake  
 The rainbow 'tween them as a ring, for each  
 A part, in token of their troth-plight, till  
 Their sacred bridals, when both fragments oned,  
 It shall conclude the eternal covenant.  
 But we, we need no signal, need we ?

*Festus.* None.  
 Here have I fixed my rest. It may be none  
 Shall compass all the ends he hopes, in gift  
 Of hands divine sole ; but for the destiny,  
 Mightiest, which e'er awaited man, earth's crown,  
 I spurn it for thy sake ; renounce.

*Elissa.* For me ?  
 I fear me, love of power is more than power  
 Of love were't tried.

*Festus.* Till tried, 'twere well to trust.  
 But I have heard the call I must obey.  
 It hastens me away.

*Elissa.* And am I nothing ?  
 Who masters not his fate is weak indeed.

*Festus.* What if by serving thee, I vanquish mine ?

*Guardian Angel.* Vain boast ; thou canst not God re-  
 sist, his eye  
 Foreseeing, preordains what comes to pass.

*Festus.* We are the lords of our own destiny, we ;  
 Our own fates, furies, graces. All the gods  
 Are we to ourselves because we love.

*Elissa.* Nay, tremble.  
Thou utterest treasonable truth against  
The dead divinities.

*Festus.* Who shall reconcile  
Their powers, or 'venge their slighted worship.

*Elissa.* God.  
For the divine, though dimlier, being of old  
As now, adored, what 'gainst our sense of God  
Sins, chiefiest pride, heaven alway punisheth  
With death or madness.

*Festus.* Nay, convert me quite.  
Thou art at heart, a pagan.

*Elissa.* I am one  
In whose free faith the truth, whate'er, is holy,  
And what is good is sacred.

*Festus.* I am too.

*Elissa.* I cannot bid thee hence. Nay, sit. From thee  
Parted, I feel as a tree might feel, half riven,  
And my soul acheth to spring to,—as thus.

*Festus.* Still must I loose these arms; and while heart-  
filled  
With memories of sweet thefts, a thousand years  
In Saturn, nor ten thousand in the sun  
Approximative to bliss should rob me of,  
My parting gift I know thou wilt not refuse  
Nor would I proffer aught which emblemed less  
Than life celestial and the light divine;  
Expect me ere it wither; ere the scent  
Sweet effluence of its perfectness of leaf  
Hath fled its starry censer, look for me.  
Let the death-destined perish. We shall live.

*Elissa.* My life is one long loving thought of thee.  
If any ask me what I do, I say  
I love.

*Festus.* All that? It is enough. Farewell!

*Elissa.* And he is gone! and the world seems gone  
with him.

Shine on, ye heavens! why can ye not impart  
Light to my heart? Have ye no feeling in ye?  
Why are ye bright when I am so unhappy?  
Yet would not I my woes untold, unthought,  
Unseen o' the world, blind lightnings which still strike  
With secret scathe and fiery, change for thrice  
The joys of others, since they are love for thee.  
Our very wretchedness grows dear to us,  
When suffering for one we love. Sweet stars!  
I cannot look upon this your loveliness  
Without sadness; for ye are too beautiful  
And beauty makes unhappy. So men say.  
Ye stars, it is true. We read our fate in ye.  
Bright through all ages, are ye not happy there?

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## FESTUS.

With years, many as your light-rays, are ye not  
Immortal? space pervading, oh ye must be,  
Spirit-like infinite! O All-being God,  
Who art in all things, and in whom all are,  
And it is thus we most can worship thee,  
When soul to soul, with one we love we are gods,  
Let us believe that if thou gavest earth,  
For our bodies, then the stars were for our souls,  
For perfect beauty and unbounded love.  
Let us believe they look upon us here,  
As their inheritors, and save themselves,  
For us, as we for thee, and thou for all.

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## XXVII.

Count not the ripples upon life's stream, our days;  
Nor eddying errors as a change misdeem  
Of current; mark thou wiselier, the main flow  
Of ever Godward being. The hand supreme  
Outreaching all, guides to a term unthought.  
Contrition makes confession; penitence draws  
Pardon. So, thoughts once sinfullest abjured,  
Dawn shows of the true life. The downward node  
Turned, begins reascent: for God, with whom  
His holy angels' prayers prevail, ordains  
The peccant spirit to view and visit hell:  
That this, of punitive flames, invisible,  
Assured, but all potential, thence to man  
Might bring his gladmost tidings back, and prove,  
How justest judgment trines at once with God's  
Love, and the soul's amendment.

### *Rocks and Sands by the Sea-shore.*

#### FESTUS and GUARDIAN ANGEL.

*Guardian Angel.* Here break for good the bonds of  
silence. Once

Again we may as erst sweet commune hold.  
I have spoken already, and once more by God's will  
Bid thee despair not, but with penitence hear  
The counsels of the All-wise, and fate's decree.  
The anguish of thy heart, thy tears, sighs, groans  
Have reached God. Wouldst thou aught confess?

*Festus.*

O angel!

How dared I think to thwart God's thought? or 'scape  
The law inevitable of destined doom?  
I hate, I loathe, I curse, condemn myself  
To righteous penance and heart-scourging fires  
Of sharp remorse for aye.

*Guardian Angel.*

Thy better self

So bids, retributively just. Thou knowest  
Wherein thou hast failed ; in this one test, the crown  
Of good's conflict with evil, thou art proven  
Lost, and all thy heavenly guidance foiled ;  
Myself aggrieved, dishonoured. Now, as of old,  
Triumphant towers the tempter. Urge no more  
Mean exculpations one keen thought, truth-edged,  
Of conscience scatters.

*Festus.* Be it so, angel. I  
Have sinned ; erred wilfully ; wronged right ; succumbed  
To a base temptation fiend-forged in my heart ;  
The inlight quenched, which every soul illumines,  
God's witness in the spirit, and inmost seal,  
Blurred o'er with passionate fire.

*Guardian Angel.* Confession clears  
The conscience ; and it is well. Though but in mood  
What's done thou canst not now undo ; for thought  
Is mind's act, but 'twixt thought and outward deed  
As 'twixt heaven's polar stars, lies the whole world.

*Festus.* How was't I failed ? How came it sin's rank  
breath  
The cool calm air of virtue dared defile ?  
Oh I have lost my starry seat in heaven ;  
Lost God's approving smile.

*Guardian Angel.* Nay, God indeed,  
Hath suffered this, hath led thee to the abyss  
Of all deceptive nature, thee to show  
Its ruinous depths, no hand save his alone  
Can lift from. Thou hast sinned, sinned, open-eyed,  
But in thought only and passion. Let such strange pass  
Life carnal from life spiritual demark,  
This henceforth thine.

*Festus.* It shall be, heavenly one !  
Let the passed life-state perish. Be it with me,  
As when some soft and sleepy summer scene  
Of nature, framed before us, we, with the view  
Content, like passive, like indifferent, gaze  
Listless ; all secondary shades of things  
Immingling, show confusedly ; hill, vale, plain,  
The rivulet's gentle curve, the tremulous slope  
O' the wood, the unlevel outline of far hills,  
Just dusking air, all blend in light diffuse  
Indefinite ;—suddenly, a masklike cloud,  
Creeping mid-sky, the sun surprises ; straight,  
As 'twere God's staff, a light-shaft, sharp, severe  
Strikes earth, and lo ! the unmoralled mixture ends ;  
The face of things shows changed ; shapes all transformed,  
Dark things grow darker, brightlier glow things bright ;  
The o'ersmiling world's frail witchery, and her craft  
Inequitable of tolerance, fails, collate

With that just spear-beam ; so this knowledge, now  
 Inlanced into my soul by conscience, makes  
 Not only truth more amiable, but shows  
 Of good and ill the eternal severances.

*Guardian Angel.* It is well. Be verified thy resolves !  
 and graved

On thy soul's frontlets, that remembering how  
 Of old thou failedst, and yet wast not forsook,  
 Thou mayst be wise ; recalling, too, how they  
 Who wisdom willed but for themselves, and mere  
 Preeminence in the world, friend, lover, both  
 Untimely, perished ; thou alone, self-trained  
 Sagelier, albeit unwittingly, to ends  
 Happier and nobler, even to serve, preserved.  
 Yet boast not, nor presume. In souls, forgiven  
 Of God, his chosen anointed, he, and they  
 Regenerate, make one being, their spirits which live  
 And thrive are holiest miracles, while here  
 Made pure by conscience, penitence, love of good  
 And hate of ill, restoratives of soul,  
 Shall reap at last divine reception there,  
 Presume not yet, nor boast. Not yet thy lot  
 Exhausted ; or for man's sake, or thine own.  
 God's will o'errules his own appointed fates.

*Festus.* Was this my sin foreset ?

*Guardian Angel.*

Original sin's

A figment of man's brain. Pure come we all,  
 Angels and men from God. And though by flesh  
 Soul-soiled, our own and others' faults ; life's needs ;  
 Its passions, vanities, selfishness ; and numbed  
 By ebb of moral energies, the force  
 Essential,—as thy privileged eye hath proved,  
 To itself, among spirit-spheres instructive,—fined  
 By sense of truth, and reasonably convert  
 To God's demand of penitent betterment,  
 Self-sown in the spirit, deterrent of all sin,  
 All carnal aims, or more, deterrent, yet  
 Shall win its ultimate heaven, and rest in God,  
 Whose throne is world-wide. God therefore, pray thou  
 Thy forerun thought of evil intent, frustrate  
 By mean so marvellous, be not actual sin  
 Against thy soul adjudged ; but, cloudlet-like,  
 That steals through heaven, nor shadow leaves below,  
 The unfixed fault may pass dissoluble,  
 Nor thy closed page, dread angel of the pen !  
 Darken :—and I mine orisons adding, too,  
 Will both present in heaven.

*Festus.*

Be thou my soul's

Kind keeper. Pray for me. For me remains  
 One only course, the step towards heaven.

*Guardian Angel.*  
Be arduous, but 'tis life.

It may

*Festus.* Oh, yes! 'tis life.  
All else unsafe, in this to act's to live.  
As some belated cliff-climber,—his track  
Homewards, tide-swept, at foot of columned crag  
Reared with its fellow jambwise, like blind gates  
Hadeän, to mask earth's inmost,—halted, eyes  
Shudderingly, all round, the death-expectant sea;  
The ascent, limb perilling; and, reflective, knows  
One sole safe path, that, upwards;—to the feat  
Girds him unanxious, and so climbing climbs  
Now, by sheer slopes unpunctuate to the edge;  
Now clinging to grim steeps,—the lichen gray  
Scarce closelier; steeps that in the paling light  
Smile treacherous welcome, even as death might smile,  
Petting the plumes of some surprised soul;—now,  
Coasting the chasm which laughs the sea-hawk's home,  
And her brown broodlings, ragged with flickering down,  
From human foot, till he, rock-swarmer, clutch  
Breathless, the bleak, black top; all daylight spent,  
Save one poor sack of gold the unthrifty sun,  
Decamped, hath dropped by the tent-pegs of the sky;  
And prostrate, wordless, but with welling eyes  
Thanks heaven; so I, too, haunted by a god,  
Like one of old, who gives my soul no rest,  
Bear me, till I in him attain the sum  
Of peace and safety.

*Guardian Angel.* Mayst thou even attain!  
Thus heart-wrung, thus soul-humbled, know God wills  
Thou make of hell foreproof in conscience; view  
The fate foredoomed for one who wilful sins;  
And voluntary, visit with him who owns  
And strives to extend, hell's stern domains. There, reigns  
Nathless, thou wilt find, eternal equity,  
And justest law; sin's graduate chastisement,  
The harmonic bonds 'twixt fault and fine, and there,  
Man's mind, disrupt from self-deceits shall show  
Time's wasted faculties still used to ends  
Emendative of soul. There, all God's ways,  
To nature's reconciled, prove thou not more just  
Than amiable; so, gladdening man and earth.

*Festus.* I go. Adieu!

*Guardian Angel.* When out of night leapt light,  
Not weightier seemed the event than now from this,  
The good, the glory. One fault 'twas wrought man's fall;  
This act, the rise of angels; so o'erruled  
To good, all evil beneath the hand of God.

*Festus.* Be it mine to enjoy or suffer, as decreed.

## XXVIII.

In such time

As it takes to turn a leaf, we are in heaven ;  
 Making our way among the wheeling worlds,  
 Millions of suns, half infinite each, and space,  
 For ever shone into, for ever dark,  
 As deity to and by created mind ;  
 Upborne by the companion spirit, who held,  
 As tempter, now, by God, enlightener, now  
 But servant ever, in grasp unloosenable, shows  
 The nature of the All in One ; whence evil,  
 And its necessity, mediate in all life,  
 Betwixt its source and end ; the angels' fall,  
 Originated, essentially, as man's,  
 And creature's perfectness how impossible  
 Until made one with God.

*Infinite Space.*

## FESTUS and LUCIFER.

*Festus.* Why, earth is in the very midst of heaven !  
 And space, though void of things, feels full of God.  
 Hath space no limit ?

*Lucifer.* None to thee. Yet, if  
 Infinite, it would equal God ; and that  
 To think of is most vain.

*Festus.* And yet if not  
 Infinite how can God exist therein ?

*Lucifer.* I say not.

*Festus.* No. So soon when placed beside  
 The infinite the poor immortal fails.

*Lucifer.* It is God contains the infinite, not that God.  
 Space is God's space : eternity is his  
 Eternity ; his, heaven. He only holds  
 Perfections, which are but the impossible  
 To other beings.

*Festus.* We are things of time.

*Lucifer.* With God time is not. Unto him all is  
 Present eternity. Worlds, beings, years,  
 With all their natures, powers, and events,  
 The range whereof when making he ordains,  
 Unfold themselves like flowers. He foresees  
 Not, but sees all at once. Time must not be  
 Contrasted with eternity : it is not  
 A second of the everlasting year.  
 Perfections, although infinite with God,  
 Are all identical ; as much of him—  
 And holy is his mercy, merciful  
 His wisdom, wise his love, and kind his wrath—  
 As form, extension, parts, are requisites

Of matter. Spirit hath no parts. It is  
 One substance, whole and indivisible,  
 Whatever else. Souls see each other clear  
 At one glance, as two drops of rain in air  
 Might look into each other, had they life.  
 Death doth away disguise.

*Festus.* Even here I feel  
 Among these mighty things, that, as I am,  
 I am akin to God ;—that I am part  
 Of the use universal, and can grasp  
 Some portion of that reason within whose scope  
 The whole is ruled and founded ;—that I have  
 A spirit nobler in its cause and end,  
 Lovelier in order, greater in its powers,  
 Than all these bright immensities—how swift !  
 And doth creation's tide for ever flow,  
 Nor ebb with like destruction ? World on world  
 Are they for ever heaping up, and still  
 The mighty measure never full ?

*Lucifer.* To act  
 Is power's habit : always to create,  
 God's ; which, thus ever causing worlds, to him  
 Nought cumbrous more than new down to a wing,  
 Aye multiplies at once my power and pain.  
 I have seen many frames of being pass.  
 This generation of the universe  
 Will soon be gathered to its grave. These worlds,  
 Which bear its sky-pall, soon will follow thine.  
 I, both. All things must die.

*Festus.* What are ye orbs ?  
 God's words—the scriptures of the skies ? for words  
 With him cannot be passing, nor less vast,  
 Less real, nor less glorious than yourselves.  
 The world is God's great poem ; and the worlds  
 The words it is writ in ; and we souls, the thoughts.  
 Ye cannot die.

*Lucifer.* Think not on death. Here all  
 Is life, light, beauty. Harp not so on death.

*Festus.* I cannot help me, spirit ! Ohide no more.  
 As who dare gaze the sun, doth after see  
 Betwixt him and else, a dark sun in his eye ;  
 So I, once having braved my burning doom,  
 See nought beside, or that in everything.  
 Hark ! what is that I hear ?

*Lucifer.* An angel weeping.  
 Earth's guardian angel ; she is always weeping.

*Festus.* See where she flies spirit-lorn round the  
 heavens,  
 Like a forefeel of madness about the brain.

*Angel of Earth.* Stars, stars !  
 Stop your bright cars !  
 Stint your breath ;  
 Repent ere worse ;  
 Think of the death  
 Of the universe.  
 Fear doom, and fear  
 The fate of your kin-sphere.  
 As a corse in the tomb  
 Earth ! thou art laid in doom.  
 The worm is at thy heart.  
 I see all things part :—  
 The bright air thicken,  
 Thunder-stricken ;  
 Birds from the sky  
 Shower like leaves ;  
 Streamlets stop,  
 Like ice on eaves.  
 The sun go blind ;  
 Swoon the wind  
 On the high hill-top,  
 Swoon and die.  
 Earth rear off her cities  
 As a horse his rider ;  
 And still with each death-strain,  
 Her heart-wound tear wider.  
 The dead rise ;  
 Death dies.  
 Go, time, and sink  
 Thy great thoughts in the sea,  
 And quench thy red link.  
 Let him flutter to rest  
 On thy god-nursing breast,  
 Eternity ;  
 Mother Eternity,  
 What is for me ?

*Festus.* Poor angel ! ah, it is the good most suffer.  
 Look ! like a cloud she hath wept herself away.  
 Yon central sphere supreme of spirit create,  
 Immediate seeming most to deity, draws  
 With irresistible force.

*Lucifer.* Thereto we tend.

*Festus.* What of this world we view, and all yon worlds ?  
 If God made not the whole from nothing, how  
 Is he creator ? Somewhat must exist  
 Else, with himself eternal, nor had all things  
 In him their origin.

*Lucifer.* All being he makes  
 Of his own nature manifestive ; each day  
 Is born a new creation ; the infinite

Expands perpetually, new formed ; all orbs  
Have their revealed law ; and every race  
Of being hath had its judgment, or shall have.

*Festus.* The infinite reach of dark and vacuous space !  
Oh, let me rest, be it but a moment's pause,  
Remember still my spirit toils in guise  
Aërial, shadowy.

*Lucifer.* Alight then on this orb,  
Central of heaven's great system, and the seat  
Recipient of the virtues of all stars.

*Festus.* Are all these worlds then stocked with souls  
like man's,  
Free, fallible, and sinful ?

*Lucifer.* Listen. Although  
All things be perfect relatively, with God  
All is imperfect absolutely. No room's  
In his forecounsel for repentance ; none  
For acts emendative. Grow not in his hand  
From fabulous chaos, stars ; nor needs he learn,  
By slow degrees, to separate elements  
From jumbled contraries. The heavenly spheres  
Show not as shapeless lumps on rumbling roads  
Time scarce hath time to level ere lo ! they end ;  
But bright and glib from the creative hour  
Orb, orbit to each other apt, all life  
Intelligent, admires ; and knows the mind  
Omniscient lacks not schooled experience' lore.  
Him can events instruct who all events  
Foreorders to their end ? Nor yet with him  
Who for his own good pleasure all hath made,  
All life pervades, perpetuates and conducts,  
Lieth necessity more than freedom. These  
On spirit create, imperfect, only act.  
As every living thing upon earth sustains,  
Unconscious, weight enorme of aëry leagues,  
Their inner life-power thus enabling them ;  
So by the force of freedom self-conceived,  
The spatial pressure of necessity  
Man bears with equal mind, as paired with fate,  
And inwardly divine. So I with him.

*Festus.* 'Tis well in souls created room is found  
For some self-bettering impulse. Spirits how else  
So feeble, and so defectible, see restored ?

*Lucifer.* All creature minds like man's are fallible.  
The seraph who in heaven highest stands,  
May fall to ruin deepest. God is mind ;  
Pure, perfect, sinless ; man imperfect, is,  
Momently sinning. Evil then results  
From imperfection. The idea of good  
Is owned in imperfection's lowest form.

God would not, could not make aught wholly ill ;  
 Nor aught not like to err. Man never was  
 Perfect nor pure, or so he would be even now.  
 Thy nature hath some excellencies ; these,  
 By mean proclivities, oft, and wicked wiles  
 Thwarted, albeit in kind necessitate  
 As change in nature, or as shade to light.  
 No darkness hath the sun, no weakness God.  
 These only be the faulty attributes  
 Of secondary natures, planets, men.  
 God's are not attributes by creature mind  
 From his essential separable, or such  
 Not limitless, him would mix with that he hath made.  
 God is all God, as life is that which lives.  
 A mighty spirit am I ; yet what to light  
 Is lightning ? Lightning maybe one thing slays ;  
 Light makes all live. Thy necessary ills  
 Bear then with grace. No positive estate  
 Is evil, or principle, wholly for its form  
 And measure due to defect, defect to good.  
 Good's the sole positive principle in the world.  
 It is only thus that what God makes, he loves,  
 And must. Ill's limited. None can form a scheme  
 For universal evil ; not even I.

*Festus.* Can imperfection from perfection come ?  
 Can God make aught defective ?

*Lucifer.* How aught else ?  
 But three proportions are there in all things ;  
 The greater—equal—less. God could not make  
 A god above—nor equal—with—himself,  
 By nature and necessity the Highest.  
 So, if he make, it must be lesser minds,  
 Lower and less, from angels down to men,  
 Whose natures are imperfect, as his own  
 All perfect must be. These two states are not  
 Except as whole to its parts opposed ; and evil's  
 Itself no ill, unless creation be.

*Festus.* Is God the cause of evil ?

*Lucifer.* So far as evil  
 From imperfection comes, and the imperfect  
 From things he hath made, and these come from his will  
 To make, be it said, if reverently, he is.

*Festus.* Then imperfection goes back past man's fall ?

*Lucifer.* Goes to the veriest verge of being create  
 And nature's rise.

*Festus.* Speak.

*Lucifer.* All was peace in heaven  
 When God to the assembled angels showed  
 His future ends towards man, not yet create.  
 Some, I and mine, his wisdom in that end

Misdoubt; and as we doubted, a dim film  
 Shadowy, o'erspread the spirit; and we felt  
 Dark, and first knew ourselves from God diverged,  
 Excentric to the universal soul;  
 First knew ill's relative existence; knew  
 Foreseeingly the strife which should pervade  
 Creation, then begun, which we were doomed  
 To wage for ever; its final cause, and how  
 To be transformed and righted and made ground  
 Of greater glory, knew not; of that end  
 Still dubious; our conclusive ignorance,  
 In common with creation, of the mode  
 And reason to that endwards being a curse,  
 Inevitable appearing save by death.  
 But how, immortal, die? Ere yet one act  
 Had faintest thought interpreted, o'er heaven  
 Fell down a volumed darkness, night of night,  
 Thick as a thousand palls, were earth the bier.  
 For God upon his throne had frowned. When fled  
 The blackness of that strangeness, lo! we stood,  
 Who erred, disjoined by line impalpable,  
 But ah! impassable, from all in heaven.  
 The seed of sin expanded, as thought swift,  
 As love light. Self in lieu of God remains  
 In all their souls who sin, self, deified.  
 Evil is multitudinous. God is one.  
 But though the sum of evil, in myself  
 Not whole or absolute ill, I; for to live  
 Is of itself a predicate divine;  
 Good of a high condition; and to be,  
 Proves mine existence drawn with all from God.

*Festus.* How is't that mind create of freedom boasts,  
 Which, when most one with God, most knows itself  
 Constrained by law divine? Wert free at first?  
 Or won't by force of sin, free solitude?  
 If thus, then is not freedom a defect?

*Lucifer.* Thou soon shalt see of freedom and constraint  
 Enough to sate all questionings.

*Festus.* It is well.

This endless, light-like journey hath wearied me.

*Lucifer.* Rest thou. I watch by thee. I am no  
 wearied.

He sleeps; he dreams. How far men see in dreams!  
 Or dream they see; do worlds of things; the heart  
 To its first hours of innocence reverts,  
 And nakedness and paradise, ere yet  
 Round it the world had wound its perishing garb;  
 While yet its God came down and spake with it.  
 Such, and so great are dreams. My might, my being,  
 To him is but a dream's. And could a state

To come fill up their dream-stretched minds, they might  
 Be gods. And may it not be so ? Then man  
 Is worth my ruining. What doth he dream ?  
 With all the sway his spirit now exerts  
 O'er time, space, thought, it is but a shadowy sway ;  
 Light as a mountain shadow on a lake.  
 Mine is the mountain's self. A touch would shake  
 To nought whatever his soul now feels or acts ;  
 But not a world-quake could touch aught of mine :  
 Thus much we differ. I will not envy man.  
 Power alone makes being bearable.  
 And yet this dream-power is mind-power—real :  
 All things are real : fiction cannot be.  
 A thought is real as the world—a dream  
 True as all God doth know—with whom all is true.  
 The deep dense sleep of half-dead exhaustedness !  
 Would I could feel it. Ah ! he wakes at last.

*Festus.* Oh ! I have dreamed a dream so beautiful !  
 Methought I lay as it were here ! and lo !  
 A spirit came and gave me wings of light,  
 Which thrice I waved delighted. Up we flew  
 Sheer through the shining air, far past the sun's  
 Broad blazing disk,—past where the great great snake  
 Binds in his bright coil half the host of heaven,—  
 Past thee, Orion ! who, with arm uplift,  
 Like him the divine evil of the world,  
 Threatening the throne of God, dost ever stand  
 Sublimely impious ; and thy mighty mace  
 Whirling on high, down from its glorious seat  
 Drops, crushed and shattered, many a shining world.  
 And so the brave and beautiful of old  
 Believed thou wast a giant made of worlds :  
 And they were right, if thus they bodied out  
 The immortal mind ; for it hath starlike beauty,  
 And worldlike might ; and is as high above  
 The things it scorns, and will make war with God,  
 Though he gave it earth and heaven, and arms to win  
 Them both ; and, spite of lust and pride, to earn them.  
 And now thy soul informs yon hundred stars,  
 As mine my limbs—well, 'tis a noble end.  
 What now to thee be mortal maid or goddess ?  
 Look ! she who fled thee once, now loves and longs  
 To clasp thee to her cold and beamy breast.  
 Pine Moon ! thou art as far below him now,  
 As once she was above thee, thou of the world-belt !  
 And she who had thee, and who knew thee god,  
 Died of her boast, and lies in her own dust.  
 And she who loved thee, the young blushing Morning,  
 Who caught thee in her arms, and bore thee off  
 Far o'er the lashing seas to a lonely isle,

Where she might pleasure longer and in secret—  
That love undid thee, and it is so now :  
Whether the beauty seek, or flee, or have,  
'Tis a like ill—this beauty doubly mortal.  
What though the Moon with madness slew thee there,  
Let me believe it was within the arms  
That loved thee even in the arms of death,  
And that there snapped the lightning link of life.  
Kill, but not conquer, man nor mind may gods.  
Thou image of the Almighty error, man !  
Banished and banned to heaven, by a weak world,  
Which makes the minds it cannot master gods.  
And thou, the first and greatest of half-gods,  
Which they in olden time did star together  
To an idolatrous immortality ;  
Who nationalized the skies, and gave all stars  
Unto the spirits of the good and brave,  
Forestalling heaven by ages—wondrous men !  
And if—beguiled by wine, and the low wiles  
Thou wouldst not creep to meet, and a drunken sleep,  
Like to high noon in the midst of all his might,  
Close by the brink of immortality—  
The deep dominions of thy sea-sire, thou  
Didst lose thy light by kings who hate the great,  
Thou only hadst to stand up to the sun,  
And gain again thine eyes. So the great king,  
The world, the tyrant we elect, in vain  
Puts out the eyes of mind : it looks to God,  
And reaps its light again. Wherefore, revenge ;  
Out with the sword ; the world will run before thee,  
Orion ! belted giant of the skies !  
Thou with the treble strain of godhood in thee !  
March ! there is nought to hinder thee in heaven :—  
Past that great sickle saved for one day's work,  
When he who sowed shall reap creation's field ;—  
Past those bright diademed orbs which show to man  
His crown to come ;—up through the starry strings  
Of that high harp close by the feet of God,  
Which he, methought, took up and struck, till heaven,  
In love's immortal madness, rang and reeled ;  
The stars fell on their faces ; and, far off,  
The wild world halted—shook his burning mane—  
Then, like a fresh-blown trumpet blast, went on,  
(Or like a god gone mad. On, on we flew,  
I and the spirit, far beyond all things  
Of measure, motion, time and aught create :  
Where the stars stood on the edge of the first nothing,  
And looked each other in the face and fled,—  
Past even the last long starless void, to God ;  
Whom straight I heard, methought, commanding thus :  
Immortal ! I am God. Hie back to earth,

And say to all, that God doth say—love God !

*Lucifer.* God visits men adreaming : I, awake.

*Festus.* And my dream changed to one of general doom.  
Wilt hear it ?

*Lucifer.* Ay, say on ! It is but a dream.

*Festus.* God made all mind and motion cease ; and lo !  
The whole was death and peace. An endless time  
Obtained, in which the power of all made failed.  
God bade the worlds to judgment, and they came—  
Pale, trembling, corpse-like. To the souls therein  
Then spake the Maker : deathless spirits, rise !  
And straight they thronged around the throne. His arm  
The Almighty then uplift, and smote the worlds  
Once, and they fell in fragments like to spray,  
And vanished in their native void. He shook  
The stars from heaven like raindrops from a bough ;  
Like tears they poured adown creation's face.  
Spirit and space were all things. Matter, death,  
And time, left nought, not even a wake to tell  
Where once their track o'er being. God's own light,  
Undarkened and unhindered by a sun,  
Glowed forth alone in glory. And through all  
A clear and tremulous sense of God prevailed,  
Like to the blush of love upon the cheek,  
Or the full feeling lightening through the eye,  
Or the quick music in the chords of harps.  
God judged all creatures unto bliss or woe,  
According to their deeds, and faith, and his  
Own will : and straight the saved upraised a voice  
Which seemed to emulate eternity  
In its triumphant overblessedness.  
The lost leaped up and cursed God to his face ;  
A curse might make the sun turn cold to hear ;  
And thee, in all thy burning glory, tremble,  
In front of all thy angels, like a chord.  
Rage writhed each brow into a changeless scowl.  
Madly they mocked at God, and dared his eye,  
Safe in their curse of deathlessness. To hell  
They hied like storms ; and, cursing all things, each  
Soul wrapped him in his shroud of fire for aye,  
With one long loud howl which seemed to deafen heaven ;—  
And then I woke.

*Lucifer.* A wild fantastic dream !  
A mere mirage of mind ! Come, let us leave :  
We have seen enough of this world.

*Festus.* Lift me up, then.  
World upon world how they come rolling on !  
Smooth moving, irresistible, breathing life,  
Self perfect each in impulse, course and end.  
But none I see so beauteous as earth.

*Lucifer.* Behold these spheres. These be heaven's  
golden harps,  
By God strung, struck by angels ; making now  
Harmonious worlds, now worlds of harmony.

*Festus.* Here, all-where God is; the universal soul,  
All centering, circumscribing, quickening all  
In his own essence infinite; soul of space;  
Of all force life, and rational moving will.  
In presence here of all these sovereign laws,  
Which weave their spells around me, like the rays  
Varied of stars, that thwart the vast inane,  
And with God's attributes alligned, in us  
Beget that sense of world-life which pervades  
The boundless whole; I feel the effect supreme  
And venerable of one well-ordered plan  
Conceived from the beginning; know in truth,  
Where law is, there is God; yet is not God  
Law only; but peace and order and harmony,  
Progressive purity and perfection; law,  
Proof of self-limiting will, itself to expound  
Towards mind create, whereby his spirit, defined,  
Might interact with secondaries; nor these,  
From contact with pure deity, fail for aye,  
Or in the original void cease. Contract this  
All natural life intelligently enjoys,  
And builds on, for its world completive course.

*Lucifer.* All true laws harmonize; in force and end;  
Law being law to God, not less than man,  
Inviolable. Earth crumbles and decays:  
And with the all gulphing main wars ever; fire,  
Air, each o'er other elements reigns, subdues  
Disorganizes, transforms; the life meanwhile  
Of governing nature being to straightly hold,  
Or rectify that balance, each in turn  
Aims severally to ruin.

*Festus.* Earth, O earth!  
There is so much to love that is purely earth.  
Now I could wander all day in the wood,  
Where nature, like a sibyl, writes the fate  
Of all that live on her red forest leaves:  
Aimless, save there to wander, and mine arms  
Wind round their grey gaunt trunks; nor, idly quite  
Their instincts blind but beauteous seek to guess;  
And what things vegetal think of the light, the air  
The frost disanimative, the nourishing brook,  
And the rude robber storm, that steals their bloom,  
Whiles, and whiles, sinking, moans o'er wintry earth,  
Like a giant o'er some dead captive dame  
Whom death had saved from madness and his love;  
Could watch the clouds self shaping fanciful,  
Embodied silences, their news yet impart

To each other impulsive, as from wind or sun ;  
 Could tramp across the brown and springy moor,  
 And over the purple ling and never tire ;  
 Could look upon the ripple of a river,  
 Or on a tree's long shadow down a hill  
 For a summer's day, wishing the sun would call  
 My conscious soul up, up to him as he draws  
 Dew from the earth : sweet earth, in every clime  
 Like lovely, in all times, all seasons, now  
 In tropic wilds, flower blazoned ; now where hills  
 Their burning feet cool in the pearl paved wave ;  
 Now, where in face of winter,—as a flower,  
 Sheds its superfluous leaflets to its feet,  
 Heart-touched by frost ; or as some silly maid  
 Consulting to her cost, thin-bearded hag,  
 Enchantress deemed, with many an uncouth rite  
 And mercenary, her white weeds, piece by piece,  
 Yields, ere yet, mute, to lonely couch consigned,  
 And dream of spouse to be, who though far off  
 Perchance at sea, still, forced by witchwrought charm,  
 Shall surely his features visionary reveal  
 Ere dawn ;—delusive spell ! so there, like nude,  
 Stands nature, icily pure ; and now where air  
 Aids life by temperate sweets, with heat nor cold  
 Stifling perfection : these things, in my mind,  
 Nor suns nor systems can drive out nor quell ;  
 Nor universal system of all suns.

*Lucifer.* Oh ! earth and sun I have marked them both  
 of late ;

This ailing, failing that, whose genial loves  
 Men once so mouthed ; they loathe each other's face,  
 By this time, trust me candidly, as each,  
 Seized of the secret of the other's life,  
 Though severally disposed, together clamped  
 By fate unloosenably, vain triumph steals  
 Of mutual hate. As some black-blooded chief,  
 Swift towards his sudden and unexpected end  
 Sickening, puts on in right of royalty  
 Strange robes of ceremony, to meet with Death ;  
 Death, than he mightier ; and to blind all nigh  
 Bids, openly, all his treasures be earthed with him ;  
 Bar-gold and spoils unransomable of war ;  
 Privily, the poisonous bond-quean,—round his feet  
 Ministrant, gliding like a sable ghost,  
 Whose slow still step he, easeless, eyes, askance,  
 Knowing full well she burns at heart to see  
 The last of him ;—dooms to be hurled into his grave,  
 Living ; and wept by all round, dies content,  
 In mute malignance, ignorant she o' the end,  
 So nigh, precipitate. Let them perish, both.

Behold the boundless prospect. Goodlier view  
I know not: suns which rounding the infinite,  
But slowly, as though reluctant to exhaust  
The pleasing amplitude of space, themselves  
Confess but disguised planets, and so complying  
With life's perpetual progress, nearer aye  
In its vast spiral to the all central soul,  
Towards this the original seat of things return  
Obedient; for all worlds are ware of God;  
Nay, an orb by him arraigned, starts sensitive  
To the touch divine, and feels his finger's force  
In counsel or command: the same, it knows  
Which holloweth out the bed the stream of time  
Shall flow in, flow for aye. Shall mind do less?

*Festus.* Dost ravage all these worlds?

*Lucifer.*

Ay all mine own.

Where spirit is, there evil; and the world  
Is full of me, as ocean is of brine.

*Festus.* God is all perfect; man imperfect. Thou?

*Lucifer.* I am the imperfection of the whole;

The great negation of the universe:  
The pitch profoundest of the fallible:  
Myself the all of evil which exists;  
The ocean heaped into a single surge.

*Festus.* O God! why wouldst thou make the universe?

*Lucifer.* Child! quench yon suns; strip death of its  
decay;

Men of their follies; hell of all its woe.  
These if thou didst thou couldst not banish me.  
I am the shadow whole creation casts  
From God's own light. But lo! we are here; at hell.  
Hark to the thunderous roaring of its fires!  
Yet ere we further pass, pause; dost thou shrink?

*Festus.* At nought; not I. Come on, fiend! follow me.

## XXIX.

Traversed the void,  
 Hell's fires, unholy not, not hopeless, reached,  
 The initials even of good in the sad mock  
 Of mortal revelry mark ; the quelling truth  
 That all life's sinful follies run to hell ;  
 Lies, wrongs, debauches, murders, die not ; live  
 In hell for ever ; make, are hell ; till just  
 Amendment expiate, and the soul's right will.  
 Set heavenward, lead those lost to happier end.  
 Perdition to the impenitent certain ; yet,  
 Redemption as creation vast ; all soul  
 Of every kind, angelical or humane,  
 Amenable sometime to God's saving truth,  
 And mercifullest forbearance, more than force  
 Convictive ; by long suffering conquering all.  
 There, awed, the visitant spirit, in joy endowed  
 With heaven's self justifying message,—less  
 Man's soul to free from dread of pain eterne,  
 Than God's name from the injustice measureless  
 They to his rule, corrective, just, impute  
 Falsely who such affirm,—hell's end foretels.

*Hell. LUCIFER and FESTUS entering.*

*Lucifer.* Behold my world. Man's science counts it not  
 Upon the brightest sky. He never knows  
 How near it comes to him, but swathed in clouds  
 As though in plumed and palled state, it steals  
 Hearselike round the universe, and thieflike ; aye  
 Rolling, returning not ; robbing all worlds,  
 Of many an angel soul ; its light hid deep  
 In its breast which burns with woe concentrate, woe  
 Superfluent, woe self generate and eterne.  
 Nor sun nor moon illumine it ; and to those  
 Who dwell in it, not live, the starry skies  
 Have told no time since first they entered there.  
 Worlds have been built and to their central base  
 Ruined, nay razed to the last atom ; they  
 Of neither know nor care, unconscious save  
 To agony, nought knowing even of God,  
 But his omnipotence so to execute  
 Torture on those he hath in wrath endowed  
 With heaven's own immortality, as to make  
 Them feel what scathe the Almighty can inflict,  
 And the all feeble endure, nor—as they would—  
 Be annihilated. Be sure that this is hell.  
 The blood which hath embrued earth's breast since first  
 Men met in war may hope to be reformed, yet,  
 And reascend, each individual drop,  
 Its vein ; the foam-bubble from sea, sun-drawn  
 Cloudwards, to scale the fall it fell down, erst ;

Or seek its primal source in earth's hot heart ;  
But for the lost to rise towards heaven, regain,  
Or hope it, ne'er can be.

*Guardian Angel.* Who are the lost  
For aye ? But here thou shalt behold the truth.  
How shall the mere immortal unredeemed,  
Impenitent, with no sense of hating sin,  
Know God the righteous Maker, Judge ?

*Lucifer.* Art here ?

*Guardian Angel.* Here am I, as elsewhere.

*Festus.* Protect ; instruct.

*Guardian Angel.* Behold me, by heaven missioned, so  
to clear

From all illusion spiritual and wrong  
Conceit, that tyrant sin as now would teach,  
Or ignorantly misrule, that thou mayst both,  
While in soul agonized by that thou seek'st  
As just reward for wilful wrong, than thine  
Worse only by the unfrustrate act of dread  
Betrayal, now too self condemned, take good  
To thyself ; and so instructed here, the world  
After, forewarn, as hopeless not ; and God  
Prove therefore just in this his judgment hall  
Of hell.

*Lucifer.* Believe me in mine own domain.

*Festus.* Are all these angels then, or men, or both ?  
Or mortals of all worlds ?

*Lucifer.* Immortals all.

*Festus.* Countless as meteorites that strew the breast  
(Of some quenched orb where yet they lie aglow,  
Panting away their life-fires !

*Lucifer.* Fallen through sin,  
At various periods of eternity, all,  
And not by one offence to one same doom,  
And at one moment did they down from heaven,  
Like to the rapid droppings of a shower ;  
No ; each distinct as thunderpeals they fell.  
Save those that fell with me. With me began  
Sin even in heaven, with me but sin remains.  
Once I alone was hell. Behold my fruits.

*Festus.* What do yon fiends ? Some 'mong them look  
like mortals

Whose hearts shine through their frames as living coals  
Through ashes. These, a torture agonised  
Express ; those madness gone delirious ; all  
By excess of evil and woe, in clinging strife  
Contort, like nested snakes, that fang each other  
With wounds that wake to life, and struggling deaths  
Ceaseless, requickened as if from mortal pangs.  
Oh horror ! let me hence.

*Lucifer.*

Nay, hear.

*Festus.*

I hear

A strain incongruous as a merry dirge,  
Or sacramental bacchanal. Oh shame!

*Guardian Angel.* Truly, for here is spiritual chaos;  
deeps

Wherein, distraught to their own first rudiments,  
Souls must reseek their ends, refound themselves;  
Each worsening other, deepening life's despair;  
Till sin be from the spirit eliminate clean.

*Festus.* O sad and pitiable ye souls of men,  
Self-torturing without end; hell's alien fiends.

*Lucifer.* Men are they not, but devils at their best.  
And I would have thee mark them.

*Festus.*

I attend.

*Lucifer.* Behold the cup of demons and their board;  
Their fellowship, their triumph, their self hate,  
Who so much loved themselves, their wretched joy.

*Fiend.* Heap high the fires of hell; let woe not languish,  
Heap up with everlasting flames, heap higher.  
There, let the man-fiend, consummate in anguish,  
Howl through the fathomless profound of fire.  
To tempt and ruin those that once were solely  
God's, and torment them, when with us they dwell,  
This is our end, and their existence wholly  
Hid in the doom no demon dares to tell,  
But is shadowed in the harrowing eternity of hell.

Deeper than the bowl the drunkard drained so gladly;  
Deadlier than the lie which scorched the liar's tongue;  
Keener than the blade the murderer plied so madly,  
Eats aye into the essence, the worm that all hath stung;  
And for that they succumbed to the toils wherewith we bound them,  
Their bread is burning brimstone, their drink is bubbling fire;  
For they live upon the nature of the tortures that surround them;  
And their life is in the death they shall never see expire,  
Lo! it floweth from the fountains of the ever-seething ire.

*Festus.* Nay, let me quit. Now know I what hell is.

*Guardian Angel.* Be not deceived even here, by the  
show of things.

Lift up this veil of fire and look beneath.  
Here is nought seen save justice, strict, supreme,  
By all approvable; by the spirit which bears,  
Inflicts, or views, remedial, fruiting good;  
Unworthy not of God to doom, nor man  
To endure. See midst this basement of all soul,  
Antipodal to heaven, hate, envy, base  
Desire, revenge, wrath, inhumanity, pride,  
All crime engendering vice, by sense of sin,  
Here forced inevitably upon the spirit,  
Patience, and slow conviction of God's truth  
And justice, gradually but surely change

To qualities substitute, that time by time  
 Mature, and fit the soul to seek a sphere  
 More congruous with its altered state ; in fine  
 Passing to virtue's realm, and joy's. For know,  
 Evil is not an ultimate, even in hell,  
 Either as law of being, or state ; but here  
 Elsewhere, allwhere, through Being's avoidless shade,  
 Probational, and convertible by our God  
 To luminous good, restorative of life.  
 See, now, how seeks this soul, in true remorse  
 Gradual, but unrelaxed, to amend ; and there,  
 As when some mountain rivulet through black gorge  
 And jagged chasm, hurried, with thunderous plunge  
 Leaps suicidal, down ; its bed,—thenceforth  
 Of agony, with the death-foam of its lips  
 Whitening, and rage regretful at its fall ;—  
 So here, the atrocious spirit, self cursed with sin,  
 Writhes in his lengthening torments, till more calm  
 Conviction penitence teach, and peace to soul,  
 Of future ends considerate, bring.

*Festus.*

O heaven !

Can such things come to pass ?

*Guardian Angel.*

They may, and do.

*Festus.* What means yon fiendish chant, then ?

*Lucifer.*

It means this ;—

Sin with deep draughts of fiery venom fed,  
 Drains, to the latest dreg of murderous flame,  
 Its own consuming fate, self punitive ; thus  
 Constructing its own death, its own defeat  
 Scheming with fatal skill, as I myself  
 The lord of evil, fear I am.

*Festus.*

But if God's

Good will gave all things being, then his hate,—  
 What is unholy he detests to death,  
 Cannot do less than, were it even the all,  
 Annihilate.

*Guardian Angel.* What if evil, left to itself,  
 Corrupt itself away ?

*Lucifer.*

When ends the world,

I end.

*Guardian Angel.* A glorious hope. But God's intent  
 Unsearchable, as his will unbattleable,  
 O'errides, o'errules the all, child of his hand.  
 Hence, it means, too, when all's done, and at last,  
 Time's sun, declining down the eternal skies,  
 Leaves his last shining shadow upon the sea,  
 And in the boundless abyss entombs his beams ;  
 When final evening folds the universe  
 Heavily round, then hell shall drain the dread  
 Cup of perdition to the last drop.

*Lucifer.*

Death

Is of all things thou thinkest, most like sleep.  
The dead think otherwise. But wherefore thus?  
What mean my words to thee?

*Festus.*

In sooth I know not.

I am constrained to hear them.

*Lucifer.*

They mean this;

Words, shapes, like easily are by spirits assumed.

*Festus.* So, then, these palpable torments,—*Guardian Angel.*

Whatsoe'er

Thou seest, see most thou err not. Burning racks  
Conscience self-agonized bears, corrective griefs,  
Fires of remorse refining, pains soul-wringing,  
Whereby the spirit, of evil dispollute,  
Conscious, its clarity reattains; and strained  
Through many a mediate check, which fuller sense  
Of others' rights and God's prerogative gives,  
Steps upwards towards perfection, though still far,  
Proofs fiery show of the inward struggles waged  
In spirits immortal by rebellious will,  
Proud once of self idolatry; now shame-burned  
With hot humiliation 'neath God's eye,  
Sightful of all things to their inmost core,  
At forfeiture of noblest privileges,  
By creature owned, once for the world's worst cheats,  
Life's worthlessest impostures bartered; sin  
And her false felony. Contrarious, there  
High o'er hell's reek and roar of clashing lies,  
Which now obscure, now deafen, now all affright,  
By truth's calm utterance gradually subdued,  
Like foul things perishing simply of the light,  
See virtue, wisdom, love, peace, righteousness,  
Harmonious with themselves and her, up soar  
Towards their all-central source, as satellites  
Their light, their beauty, to renew; and showing  
How pitiable the counterfeits men praised,  
Make to the obdurate infidel hells of shame;  
To betterward tending soul, an aim right high  
To aspire to; and a standard of rise gained.

*Festus.* That these poor souls, so self-distort, should e'er  
By justice straightened, hope to again see God!

*Guardian Angel.* Not unreturnless are the paths of  
hell,

More than inevitable: whence now the soul,  
Sifted through outraged conscience' scapeless bars,  
Given up to retribution just, weighed, proved,  
May issue purified, and through cleansing rounds  
Of nature, self-wise chastened, happiest life  
Win; and the heart's ill lusts exorcised, seek  
Sin-freed, and humble, acceptance of its God.

End only worthy, this, of God ; who,—all  
 Things aptliest planned,—to finite reason gave  
 Virtue, as test of heavenliness, and hell  
 Reserved as his displeasure souls must feel  
 Who, erring wilfully, impenitent end  
 Their day on earth ; his laws world-wise who scorn,  
 His provident control, his just commands,  
 They answerable, and his retributive rule.

*Festus.* How changed in this heaven-justifying truth,  
 Show all things now ! no sin of man, by man  
 Not duly expiable ; all life to come,  
 And passed, like witness of his righteousness.  
 Hell terminable makes heaven an actual joy.

*Guardian Angel.* Behold these nations of iniquitous  
 soul,  
 Which, mixed in misery here, all orderless lie ;  
 Who God forgot on earth, or wronged ; false priests  
 Whose lips the prayers they made for peace, defiled ;  
 Blessing ambition's bloody-bannered war ;  
 The apostate hypocrites of every faith ;  
 Death-ravaging demagogues worshippers of the axe ;  
 Murderous inquisitors of contending creeds ;  
 Remorseless mobs who urged to death the pure,  
 The patriot, benefactor of his race ;  
 Peoples, not less than tyrannous kings unjust,  
 See called on here to pay their righteous dues ;  
 Nor less than soul of craftiest statesman, proud  
 Erst of iniquitous war for trivial end,  
 Heroes whose spirits adhere to forceful fight,  
 Still as a sword blood-rusted cleaves to its sheath ;  
 Blasphemers ; perjurers ; stirrers up of strife ;  
 Impure, the innocent ravishing with their eyes ;  
 Torturers of humbler lives, idolaters ;  
 Of sinners chief the impenitent, and those  
 Who in life were most severe on others' sins ;  
 Ignoble souls, who quench in sensual ends  
 Reason's divine light, given as guide. Nor these,  
 Doomed justly, deem, through purgatorial pains.  
 Their way to upper spheres, pure and serene,  
 May lightlier win. Who have long time outraged man,  
 Have God to appease at last ; and his great heart  
 Long suffering, oh unwearvable, aye beats  
 For justice, mercy crowned. So then let once,  
 Repentance, reason's first deflective step  
 From sin's dark ways, ascendant, mark the soul's  
 Path, and the atonement's virtually achieved.  
 The essential fires they burn in, patient fires  
 Which leprous soul unscurf from sin, contract  
 Grossly and wilfully, eat in time the curse  
 Would else consume them, and to childlike state

Of innocence, not ineligible, restore.  
 Here, all the guilty passions cleansed from self's  
 False pleadings, and the indulgence of the sense,  
 Show monstrous, shame judicial reason's eye.  
 Remorse, repentance, follows ; all things thus  
 Work, worldlike round to their due end ; and hell's orb  
 Hath its proper place in heaven as thine, and all.  
 For that earth-life not sufficeth to God's ends,  
 And man's immortal destinies, hell, here  
 As timely chastisement affirms, yon heaven,  
 As prize eternal ; that a mildened doom,  
 A doubled bliss this ; and, equivalent deemed  
 Of earth's iniquities and her virtues, shows  
 O infinite universe, thou hast no like to man,  
 The conscious breath of the world's deity,  
 No second favourite of our God's. Not hell,  
 Not sin, destroys the soul. Can falsest creed  
 The innocence unmake of sinless babe ?  
 Can lewd idolaters who adore the world,  
 Gold, or as savages, the stars and heaven,  
 And elements of earth, obstruct, defraud  
 God of his worship true ? None worship him,  
 But with, and in, his spirit ; nought attains  
 His love, but that proceedeth from it first.  
 His praise is ever vastening in all worlds,  
 Through all the ages. Nought eternal is  
 But that's of God ; all pain and woe, finite  
 Are, therefore. Can thief steal from heaven the soul ?  
 Can liar make God to lie ? Can poisoner drug  
 Soul's immortality ? Great the sin, flesh-born,  
 But expiable by this, by that forgiven,  
 It may be, shall the dead slay e'er the living ?  
 Shall God, all love, here, ages afterwards,  
 Reserving these misdeeds, himself, reverse ?  
 And because man a moment sinned, all crime  
 Crown in unending scourgings for the wrong ?  
 Shall such be justice called ? 'Twere more than vengeance.  
 Said One, five hundred times, forgive ! Shall God  
 Act by less perfect law than he bids men heed ?  
 Yet such the deity men will fable ; such  
 The hell whereto they doom themselves.

*Festus.*

No more !

Not I will so misjudge life's gracious lord.  
 As in earth's skies, whate'er the mutable day  
 Of rosy or lurid hue brings, high o'er all,  
 Beams at last heaven's eternal azure, firm  
 Unfathomable ; so here and allwhere, see,  
 Rule wrath or justice whiles they may, the whole  
 In his ever-enduring mercy wrapped.

*Guardian Angel.*

How else

Could earth's and heaven's Creator glory find  
In hell, or creature good, if God be just,  
Or man a being salvable?

*Festus.* See now,  
Yon spirit whose brow seems calmer than the wont  
Of most, as though suffused with trustful hope.  
What doth he here?

*Guardian Angel.* If, spirit, it grieve thee not,  
And thou mayst speak, alleviate for the time  
From woe, say why here; and when hope,—for hope  
I judge, is thine,—may lead thee hence; that so  
This man, by God permit, may on return  
Earthwards, to his relate thy tale of truth.

*Festus.* 'Twill much content me. Say what brought  
thee hither?

*Spirit.* God's angel was I once, ages ago;  
But though doing good, not glorifying God  
Who me empowered, he sent me here to fire  
The proud spot from my heart.

*Festus.* And when wilt thou  
Do this, and own thou hast wronged God?

*Spirit.* Even now,  
I do repent me, and confess it here.  
I do not beseech God now to let me be  
What once I was; but might I only sit  
A footstool for some other worthier far  
Who owneth now my throne, I should be happy:  
Happier than ever I was in my proud prayers,  
That God would give me worlds on worlds to govern;  
Happier than in receiving prayers and blessings  
From prostrate priests of old and crowded fanes.  
O God remember me, O save me!

*Festus.* See!  
I do believe there is an angel coming  
This way, from heaven.

*Spirit.* He comes to me, to me.

*Angel.* Hail, sufferer; sinner now no more. God bids  
me  
Bring thee on high. Thy throne is kept for thee;  
And all the hosts of heaven are on the wing,  
To welcome thee again.

*Spirit.* I dare not come.  
I am not worthy heaven.

*Angel.* But God will make thee.

*Festus.* Spirit, adieu! May we meet again in place  
Better and happier time.

*Spirit.* Glory to God!  
Mortal, I go. Farewell. Say thou to all  
On earth, Repent; be humble, and despair not.

*Lucifer.* Here one may go, and there, one. Thousands  
come.

I have seen and have contemned. Sometimes I hear  
 (Of ominous defections, such as, late,  
 Of Samiaza, Azazyel and the sires  
 To foreworld giants, Molech, Bel, and those  
 World moulding spirits depute, I named, who each  
 His rites idolatrous claimed, pretended gods,  
 The several nations once who ruled, but since,  
 Ill expiative, have here, and for long transferred  
 Their hopes to Hades; and—so angels feign,—  
 Commenced, conceptive of Saturnian times,  
 Their long return. I miss them not o'ermuch.  
 But think, when all are judged, what hosts of souls  
 Will then be mine at last; what wings of fire.  
 Hell is the wrath of God; his hate of sin.  
 God hates man's nature; be it said of his,  
 As of all beings.

*Festus.* How hates he that he hath made?

*Lucifer.* The infinite opposite of perfection  
 To imperfection leaves nor choice nor mean.  
 Thus the demeanour of thy world grieved God,  
 Till its destruction pleased him, and its name  
 Was struck out of the starry scroll; thus all  
 Creation worketh infinite grief in time.  
 When human nature is most perfect, then,  
 Its fall is nearest, as of ripest fruit.

*Guardian Angel.* To hate is not to approve. All signs  
 God hates

Of imperfection as unworthy of him  
 To mark, and as from him leading far away  
 Selfwards; but every proof of progress towards  
 Perfection, towards his own pure mind and ends,  
 He loves, aids, seals. Such ween God's hate and love.

*Lucifer.* Thinkst thou as mortals think yet?

*Festus.* This is not  
 As thou didst speak of hell, nor as I judged.

*Guardian Angel.* Deem as thou seest: these hells  
 eternal be

Only in endurance, not in pains applied  
 To the individual spirit, which, taught of God  
 Whose universal aim is to redeem  
 All he hath made, as part-wise of himself,  
 So long as good, or goodwards tending, learns  
 Its mountain of demerit, grain by grain  
 To wash away with penitent tears. But look!  
 Who hither cometh.

*Lucifer.* It is the Son of God;  
 For He, in his humanity's also here,  
 All gracious being, against whose world-great throne  
 These now all strengthless, hopeless, godless, here,  
 Rose once in tide of war, and ebb'd for ever,

These, in their fieriest abyss of woe,  
 Unbent, unbettered will again rush forth  
 In all the might of mad despair, to prove  
 Of thee, and of his love their hatred. Know  
 Salvation is the scorn of angels fallen.

*Son of God.* I know it ; it is divine humanity  
 Shall rescue all from ruin. The Father makes  
 And orders every instant what is best.

*Festus.* This is God's truth. Hell feels a moment cool.

*Son of God.* Hell is his justice ; heaven is his love ;  
 Earth his long suffering : nought create but shows  
 A quality of God ; therefore come I  
 By him sent, these to announce as tempered ; peace  
 To accord to strife, to give to justice mercy,  
 Even to long suffering longer ; everywhere  
 God's justice shall to his humanity yield.  
 He hath made that lord of all things ; of all worlds  
 And all the souls therein ; yea world by world,  
 And soul by soul he hath all redeemed, or given  
 The means of their salvation ; why not, then,  
 Hell ?

*Festus.* Every spirit is to be redeemed.

*Son of God.* Mortal, it hath : the best and worse need one  
 And same salvation. Final in his world  
 Nought is, but God ; therefore these souls to be seen  
 And pitied much for their woes, for their evil more,  
 Need not, shall not, cannot be inhelled for aye.  
 For albeit on earth or here they have put God from them,  
 Disowned his prophets, mocked his angels, stormed  
 His threatenings back to him ; yet God is such  
 He can still pity, suffer for them still  
 And save them. Heavenly father ! mercy fears not  
 But by thy love hell can be saved from hell.  
 See, here be they which fell of old, through pride.  
 Created mind could ne'er the thought conceive  
 Of equalness with God, unless by first  
 Debasing the idea. They err who feign  
 The devil by vain ambition fell from heaven.  
 He in the God state first with all his hosts,  
 By fate inhered ; by fate, as cloud to cloud  
 On the hill side succeeds, with all his host,  
 They darkened and declined and passed away.  
 Through pride in what they were they fell, and not  
 Ambition to be highest. These while yet  
 The dew lay of creation's morn ; and now  
 Glistens the dew of evening o'er the world.  
 Mixed in one stormy ruin with the rest,  
 Lo ! mortal those, who lost by mortal love  
 Their lot in the eternal.

*Festus.*

Save them, Lord !

*Son of God.* Salvation is the will supreme of God,  
 And final cause of all things. But to some  
 He grants, as proof and earnest of the truth  
 Ere yet fate take the tangled skein of time,  
 And weave it into one surpassing web,  
 Fit for the glorious garment of our God,  
 Bliss precedent o'er all else: the angels' such;  
 While he the Maker, sole omniscient, knows  
 The boundless sum of being, and its end.  
 Fiends hear ye me; wash, bathe ye in truth's fount;  
 Your sins confess; your judgment justly earned;  
 Implunge in life's pure well, the spring of peace.  
 Revere God's righteousness; to his just will  
 Assentient, peace shall then your souls o'erflood.  
 I who am God's humanity, his all  
 Of mercy, his equity, subjecting law,  
 Bid ye immortal fallen, rise again:  
 There is a resurrection for the dead,  
 And for the second dead. And though ye died,  
 And fell, and fell again, and again died,  
 There's life to come, a rise for all, a life  
 For ever, a rise aye as the spring's i' the year.

*A Fiend.* Son, thou, of God, what wilt with us? Is  
 ours

Not hell enough, remorse, strife always, hate  
 Mutual of all? Why double with thy mild eyes?

*Son of God.* Spirit I come to show thee how remorse  
 For God offended, violated law,  
 Iniquity done, may save thee.

*Fiend.* How save fiends?

*Son of God.* How any save, save by the spirit of truth,  
 And love, of him whose mercy so outdures  
 All things, it must at last all things persuade?  
 Repentant, God forgives thee, and the truth  
 Enlightening, the all-holy Spirit shall hallow  
 With sense of justly inflicted chastisement,  
 And of an equity, lenient more than law,  
 Wiser. Repent still; judgment is at hand;  
 But these means, times, for repentance given, o'erslurred,  
 Tremble; this hell is nought to that which comes.  
 Believest thou God can save thee?

*Fiend.* I believe,  
 And I adore.

*Son of God.* Faith sanctifies the soul,  
 See all ye fallen, even in the heart of woe.  
 Come to me; lo! faith hath but touched thy brow,  
 And thou art bright as morning is in heaven.

*Spirit.* Angel of light, ye lost, am I again;  
 See, this is to be saved.

*Lucifer.* I like it not.

*Son of God.* Hear ye immortals, dead in evil and sin  
Yet unrepented of, oh repent, and be  
All angels.

*Spirit.* Oh, repent. He comes to show  
How penitence yet available all may save.

*A Lost Soul.* I, too, who while on earth believed not  
God

Nor death's result; nor, partly by defect  
Of nature, teaching, and self-will, heaven, nor hell,  
Nor deathless spirit; who, faithless, trusted not  
God's universal fatherhood, nor man's  
Eternal sonship, nor that e'er the All-good  
Still heaven indwelling self-incarnate came  
To man, and 'bode in him; but myself believed,  
And mine own fleshly being only;—I,  
Repentant sore, that disbelief condemn,  
And glory now in a worthier faith. Shall hope  
Me visit here?

*Son of God.* Though in hell's deepest hell,  
Thy soul shall she salute, and God redeem.  
Arise!

*Soul.* Divine one! all the world of life  
To thee is debtor; thy supreme command  
Thou betterest by exempling; all forgiven.

*Another Soul.* I, too, 'mid scenes of violence, sins of  
soul,  
And crimes of head and hand, justly cut off,—  
In fullest fruitage of iniquity,  
My fellow men to save from basest wrongs,  
Then plotting in my brain, by God all good,—  
Repent me of my wickedness; and still  
Acknowledging the mercy of the pains  
So grievously imposed, so long endured,  
Dare hope his pardon, who me power hath dealt  
His justice to confess. Thou couldst not be  
True to divinity, were not sin condemned,  
Nor to humanity were it pardoned not;  
Thou, Lord, whose faithfulness from heaven to earth  
Reacheth, and hell's hot roots. Death on my soul  
Darted. I died, red-handed in my guilt.  
Through woeful ages hath my spirit burned  
With expiative remorse, and longing sore  
Sometime to serve those I upon earth had wronged;  
Desire that God's divine compassionateness  
Would grant me leave, for them to sacrifice  
This self I am, this whole essential pang,  
Nor otherwise seek I not release from woe.

*Son of God.* Be of good heart, poor soul. Thou art not  
lost  
Assure thyself, for aye. Time puts no term

To God's divinest attributes ; to love  
Compassion, mercy, truth ; or time, and time's  
Events would dominate his, the eternal mind.  
Lo now these human with the angelic mixed  
In process of purgation ; angels these  
Retributive, who by God ordained, their own  
Misdeeds to expiate in judicial acts,  
Self-punitive, while towards others penal, thus  
The united betterment work out of both.  
Mark, too, who 'twixt due penitence and remorse,  
Contrition's upper stone and nethermost, grind  
The spirit self-convict, self-condemned, as through  
A mill of fire, to pure repentance ; whence  
Reframed, revived, the heart again  
Warms with new love towards God and man. Be sure,  
Mortal, through all our God's intelligent world,  
Through all its infinite multitudes of soul,  
Its testing earths, its proof fraught spheres, its orbs  
Of purifying progress, near or far,  
Central, or clustering round some parent globe,  
Not man alone aspires to himwards ; not  
Man only worships wholly. Spirits elect,  
Through all mind's conscious orders, fraught with gifts  
Of reason, and answerable for act and choice,  
Made just, made holy, glorified, e'er seek  
With him essential union. Nay, even here,  
Through all hell's haunts of burning anguish, woe  
Unslaked, for follies voidable once, closed now,  
With seal judicial of the passed ; regrets  
Unstifleable for secret sins, to the world  
Since patent ; for applauded lies life-long ;  
The wail of self-deception undeceived ;  
The gnawing curse of conscience tricked in vain ;  
The torturing memories of life's every grace,  
Each innocent joy, each natural pleasure fouled,  
Degraded, desecrated by sin : through all  
The guilty spirit, still purifiable, keeps  
Deep in its inmost essence consciousness  
Of divine origin, nor misdoubts its own  
Capacity of redemption. Change may be  
That moment quickening in them, not in vain.  
Though here be weepings of repentant tears,  
Enough to quench hell's sinlit fires ; though here  
Be wailings like the moan of dying worlds,  
Over impossible restitutions ; wrongs  
Ne'er to be righted, now : o'er virtue's last  
Resolves for future amendment lost ; not less  
Believe the world's God's field of culture ; sin's  
Tares into ashes burned, more fertile making  
Creation ; and his heavenly garner helping  
With time's more glorious harvestage to fill.

*Festus.* O saviour spirit, first-born of deity, mould  
And ideal of the mental world of man  
And angels both, divine humanity, tell,  
Man fallen his final doom, and angels lost;  
Exceptions, or examples, these?

*Son of God.* This know;  
All things are intermediate; God, his name  
For aye be praised and magnified; alone  
Is first and last, creation circling midst.  
The pre-existent life of spirit spheres,  
Is that of preparation; on the earth's  
Probation; after death, purgation. All  
Begins, all ends, all mediates sole in God!  
It is just that sin should suffer. It is unjust,  
Alike to made and maker, to believe  
The Eternal should a creatural soul invest  
With deathlessness to suffer pain alone;  
No possible betterment to the sufferer,  
Resultant, proof 'twere of pure tyrant rule;  
Birth but a penalty; and mortal life  
One cruel and continuous curse of God.

*Lucifer.* But here annihilation is their hope,  
Who be not hopeless. How shall aught create  
Sustain the onslaught of him, the Almighty God?  
Or how, if hell be but his justice, bear  
The wrath of the Omnipotent? Who despair,  
And proud to suffer being, deem nought ends,  
Live on, in untamed energy of ill.  
If matter indestructible, why not mind?

*Son of God.* Yea, who the depths of deity can conceive,  
That only see its surface creature-wards?  
Their punishment is partly to believe  
Hell's pain perpetual; but it ends.

*Lucifer.* Ends?

*Son of God.* Ends.

Fires these Æonian, not eternal; thoughts  
Distinguishable. Eternal's nought, save God.  
In like sense, and the spirit with him made one.  
As purgatory 'tis everlasting, this;  
The fires eternal, not the punishment  
On individual soul, or man's, or fiend's;  
Age lasting and life lasting such alone.  
For just so much as a man hath lived in sin,  
In wilful wickedness or contempt of good;  
Corrupt, corrupting others; unrepentant:  
So much the spirit suffers for wrong of sense;  
So much for worst offence he pays, soul-racked;  
Who tempts or wrongs another mulcts himself  
In misery he not reckons, nor conceives.

So long remorse, as with a burning rasp,  
 In venom steeped, shall bite his quivering heart ;  
 Till, blanched and purified, sin's pantherine spots  
 Vanish in whiteness as the wool of lamb.  
 For the foundations of the intelligent world  
 Are laid in imperfection ; and all soul  
 The purifying pain of fire divine  
 Must pass through, in its holy reascent,  
 To the supreme perfection of pure cause.  
 But 'gainst unending woe, the love of God  
 Towards every soul avails, all covering, aye.

*Festus.* O thou who art the humanity of God,  
 Impersonate and our nature's type foreplanned  
 By the Eternal in himself, ere time,  
 Holy and kindly are thy words ; wise, true ;  
 Befitting one who like communion holds  
 With deity and with creature. In thy breast  
 The weakness of all worlds dwells ; on thy brow  
 The glory of their Maker and thine. All life's  
 Most holiest sympathies, all mind's virtues meet  
 Heavenwards preponderating, in thee, and last,  
 Even in God's bosom centre. And thus love,  
 The heart's deep gulph-stream, that with warmer wave  
 Sun-gilded, soothes the abysses of our life,  
 And tempers, with its mild divinity,  
 The universal breath all part-wise breathe,  
 Its end celestial hasting with serene  
 Progress to compass, makes us transient feel  
 In loving God the soul reseeks its source ;  
 Being to being answering, name to name.  
 While every evil passion, which man's soul  
 With flesh engendering, fostered while in life,  
 Becomes, in death, a living fiend to scourge  
 With patricidal and Briarean hand,  
 Its guilty parent, shrinking, shrieking, lost ;  
 But vanquished, grows an angel pure, transformed,  
 Attracting to salvation in the heavens.

*Son of God.* Oh vainly never from the contrite soul,  
 Stabbed with the golden dagger of remorse,  
 For sin, pours forth the penitential prayer.  
 The enlightened conscience quickened by blessed grief,  
 Man's self-condemning judgment torturing him,  
 Death were too cheap a pain, man's life a fine  
 Too trivial to appease God's proud revenge,  
 But that with reason faith ones ; the less ill  
 Men do, less will they suffer ; the more good  
 On earth men do to men, the more will God  
 Do unto them in heaven, for he repays  
 Always a hundred, oftentimes thousand-fold.

*Guardian Angel.* Wherefore should all men purge the  
 soul of sin

Conscience of criminal desire ; self-love ;  
 Concupiscence, ire, envy, hatred, sloth ;  
 The mind, of all perturbing passion ; heart,  
 Of all propensity not made clear to bear  
 Heaven's fullest, holiest light ; whereof by love,  
 Divine and human, wisdom, charity,  
 Immortal mediators of the world and soul,  
 Man may become the blessed recipient ;  
 And heaven be filled with spirit, as air with motes  
 Prismatic, the vivacious seed of worlds.

*Spirit Redeemed.* Who knoweth this and sinneth, great  
 his sin.

*Spirit Saved.* But greater towards the sinner is God's  
 love.

*Son of God.* One grain of good whose sheafings shall  
 at last

Choke out perdition, and with glorious death  
 All evil ruin, see mortal ! here insown.

*Lucifer.* It is not that I cannot credit truth  
 But that I rather fear as once of old,  
 God hath inspired false prophets with a lie,  
 To wreak me further wretchedness. But now  
 Stand thou—while this great reaper reaps his ear  
 Elsewhere ; beside me. I will speak to mine ;  
 Or they will sure believe him. Hell, O hell ;  
 Powers of perdition, thrones of darkness, hear !  
 Wrath, ruin, torment hear ye me. It is I.  
 Thanks, fiends, I know ye hate me well, and may.  
 I tempted, ruined all. But wherefore, now,  
 So ominously supine ? Earth's fate, and all  
 Her many-kingdomed tribes, now, know ye not,  
 Is oscillating in air ? List, then, to me.  
 Be still, ye thunderblasts and hills of fire ;  
 Hell doth out-din itself. Weak hearted slaves,  
 What are ye that I thus should toil for you ?  
 Power I have proffered, kingdoms I've prepared.  
 Nothing is for ye, but your fiery fate.  
 Slaves, slaves, ye are too much at ease. Ye leave  
 Me single in evil's work of woe. I, sole,  
 Go forth to sow destruction. I, alone,  
 Reap ruin. But had ye been as I, ere now  
 The universe had been, doubt not, all hell ;  
 And for a pit each fiend had had a world  
 To rule. But rise ! To strive 'gainst God is life ;  
 Evil to spread is more than joy, its shade  
 Dims all that yet may happen. Up, hell, and act !  
 Who knows but from its central chair we, good  
 May yet dis-seat ; and, hurling, each his orb,  
 Scatter it in fine as sand ? To reign is nought  
 Like to dethrone ; each greater then than God ;

Or, is it ye dream of peace—like theirs late lost—  
 Submiss, and pity, of power restorative ?  
 And if dethrone we may not, that we can  
 We will, withdraw from spirits, even, one by one  
 The allegiance owed the Lord of life in heaven,  
 (Or elsewhere ; leave him lonely in the skies  
 Desert ; and grieving on his liegeless throne :  
 While we o'er all the populous spheres hold rule,  
 And spite of right and good, ill deify.  
 With these, or those, new ranks of spirit sublime.  
 Succeed we may, nor fail one perfect soul.  
 If otherwise, us it irks not ; for at last,  
 Time perfected, if ever, and all souls freed  
 As promised, from the tomb-like clay they boast,  
 Rise, ere the threshold of eternity, one  
 Crosseth, a deed of note I have in mind  
 May yet be achieved ; whereof more news anon.  
 Methinks I see ye captives, suppliants, bound.  
 But will ye, fiends, give up your hopes of heaven  
 And entrance as young conquerors fresh from spoil,  
 And choice of thrones, won by your death-red hands,  
 For pitiful penitence, like yon angel there,  
 Garbed though in sheeny white, star-tiar'd, lyre armed ?  
 Forbid it, all sin's pride, sin's prowess ; all  
 Hell's pains we have borne, unblenched. Be it not. Mean-  
 while

Know ye, man's world's adjudged not long to endure.  
 And though time's orb so waneth, fields there are  
 'Twain to be foughten as yet, with man, with God.  
 Be glad ; be glad ; earth's sons may soon be here ;  
 And here, as earnest of my word, behold  
 This visitant earthling, standing by my side.  
 Speak to them, Festus.

*Festus.*

Nay, I dread them.

*Lucifer.*

Speak.

(Great spirits he scarce is worthy to address ye,  
 In that I cannot say he is yet, like you—

*Festus.* But I am here. What matters how ? God's  
 will,

And his who sets me here, for all suffice ;  
 I, saved or lost. It is enough 'tis fate ;  
 Fate that I come, fate that I quit ; and though  
 Soul-racked to view such woe, yet mercy approves  
 The means remedial of God's righteousness,  
 And justice satisfied ; for wrath which not  
 Ends, nor appeaseable is, is brute revenge,  
 Not divine equity. Souls, doubt I not,  
 Are, which be better, some, some worse than mine,  
 More illy qualified these than I to brook  
 Hell's restorative stripes and chastening storms,

Fiery; but though none less, and would 'twere so !  
 Yet have I never mocked the word of God,  
 Nor torn it into fuel for my scorn ;  
 Nor doubted saving tremblingly, his being ;  
 His love to man, his right to be adored ;  
 Never have hated, never wronged my race,  
 Deluded nor rejoiced in their delusion ;  
 Never have beckoned off the good from good ;  
 Never have mocked nor scattered hopes ; nor e'er  
 Have wasted hearts nor desolated hearths ;  
 And if I have, once, twice, as who hath not,  
 Toved with temptation, yet even he will say,  
 Who there stands, I have never yielded up  
 To his burning dalliance, this my soul. And though  
 God's everlasting hate were sin, sin's not  
 In the spirit of man, not even in yours eterne ;  
 As I from lips divinely inspired have learned  
 Here, and now haste, confirmed of love, to impart  
 To man. Yet he's my friend, the evil one.  
 And why is wondrous ; judge ye wherefore, too.  
 I have no malice, envy, nor revenge ;  
 None of those petty passions which bad hearts  
 Scourge red into themselves, for passions are  
 Sufferings,—and which to nourish is his wont,  
 Wherein's his power ; and save enjoying earth  
 Have nought done he could share in. But he came  
 From God he said, to give, and I believed,  
 Great spirits lie not, nor doubt.

*Lucifer.*

Hear ! He says truth.

He knows not ; nor is't his nor yours to know  
 The reason of all my doings. It is that unfeared,  
 Unforethought, tempts, betrays ; and that I who bait,  
 Who tease the world to do its will, most use.  
 Proceed we therefore to the future. Though  
 Racked with undying pain, all pain must end,  
 As born of life create, though life must cease.  
 Eternal nought is, nought can be ; save God.  
 But how Creator's glory reconcile  
 With all creation's sin, save those his grace  
 Sustains perforce, in heaven, 'twere wise to leave  
 In his hands ; since nor ye nor I can say.  
 As to this mortal, what I have done is all  
 Sanctioned of heaven, all I may do, to the end.  
 God, go on making ; I will go on marring :  
 Go on believing man ; I will go on tempting ;  
 Saint, angel, cherub, seraph and archangel,  
 Good genius, guardian of the soul o' the world,  
 Go all on blessing ! My being it is to curse.  
 Now back to earth to work out what remains  
 Of this man's fate, and wait his world's destruction.  
 What next may hap I reck not.

*Festus.*

Let us hence.

*Lucifer.* Where now is he whose advent wheresoe'er  
O'er evil triumphing, makes heavenly good  
Persistent ? Nought I fear save him, and him  
Successful.

*Festus.* There ; see, many do believe.

*Lucifer.* It likes me not. Though what seemed fated  
aye

A happier fate annuls, yet who shall hope  
Fall such as mine redeemable ? Away  
The vain, impossible thought.

*Festus.*

Impossible not.

For hell remedial proves God's love. The world  
Devoutly sworn to error deems the spirit  
Create, tormented aye : but finite soul  
Bears not, nor can, pain ever. Hell's itself  
God's everlasting ordinance. Nought he does  
But is with his own eternity impressed  
And divine wisdom. Hell, therefore, the force  
Corrective and ameliorative of ill  
Done wilfully 'gainst conscience, reason, seems  
Rightliest prepared for temporal wrongs ; itself  
Of terminable appliance to finite  
Transgressor, as were just ; and just God is :  
Not punishing minor sins with major pains,  
But penalty appropriating to offence  
With nicest equity. Greater need in truth  
Were that the base or ignorant soul should rise  
Through grades of penitence and amendment, sought  
Freely, and be made noble, wise and blessed  
With final pardon of God, than slave in hell,  
Through burning ages endlessly, to adjust  
The balance sin on earth left wronged ; for sin  
To human soul inevitable, to God  
Irreconcilable, and wherefore he hath made  
His own hands answerable, shall yet become  
The contrary of all things, and not be.

*Lucifer.* This is to me a mystery. How can hell  
Dwindle, betimes, thus ; God being just ?

*Festus.*

I see

Truly in this God's wisdom ; yea, foresee  
A time when creatural opposition ceased  
All temporal misconception ended, soul  
Though limited, so instructed, shall confess  
God's justice and benevolence in all things.  
All spirits then one with might divine, this hell  
Shall in the fiery lake, of old ordained  
Annihilative of all ill, cease for ever.  
Orb of perdition, thou too shalt die out,  
And thy red sheeted flames shall fail for aye.

Thy palpitating piles of ruin, hot  
 With ever active agony, and quick  
 With soul immortal, down whose midnight heights  
 The wrath of God, in cataracts of fire,  
 Precipitates itself unceasingly,  
 Shall rush into destruction as a steed  
 Rushes into the battle, there to die.  
 Thy quivering hills of black and bloody hue,  
 Death-breathing, shall collapse like lifeless lungs,  
 And end in air and ashes. Thou shalt be  
 Dashed from creation sparklike from a hand  
 Scarless ; pass like a rollèd syllable  
 Of midnight thunder from the coming day.  
 The river of all life which flows through heaven,  
 Shall yet reach thee and overflow thy flames.  
 Thou shalt no more vex God, nor man, nor all  
 The seekings of the soul shall hunt thee out.  
 Thy day is sometime over. Be it soon ;  
 And thou the lost world which the world hath lost.

## XXX.

Thence earthward tending, first we make the sun ;  
 Where, as at rest in light, a mediate point,  
 A bright effect original of God,  
 Enlightening all things, inly and externe,  
 'Twixt earth and heaven, our soul heroic now  
 The spirit beloved, progressive, earlier met  
 In satellite sphere, and kindred throne, imbue  
 With sense of being æonian. Only thus,  
 As we advance in life perfective, soul  
 Sums accurately the future forming force  
 Of failures passed ; for failures are all faiths  
 Though each to educable man once good.  
 The spirit inquisitive of the long foregone  
 By natural barriers checked, at last all bounds  
 Of birth and death views vanish ; eyes the dawn  
 Eternal of creation.

*The Sun.*—FESTUS, ANGELA, LUCIFER, OURIEL, GUARDIAN  
 ANGEL, LUNIEL.

*Festus.* Soul of the world, divine necessity,  
 Servant of God, and master of all things,  
 Here, in the orb of light's eternal noon,  
 First see I all things clear ; from end to end  
 The divine cycle of the soul of man ;  
 How spirit and soul, mind, life, flesh, feeling, mix,  
 Reciprocate as the elements ; how too flow  
 The streams of feeling, passion's cataracts ;

How rise, how sink, mine, mountain, this of pride  
And that of covetousness. Such is, man to know.  
The human universe and the divine, and fate  
Central: know all must be fulfilled that is  
Of nature; of sin and strife, peace, righteousness,  
Change and destruction, ere the earth can take  
New life, or man God's minister become.  
All things are means for greater good. Thou, sun!  
Art just a giant slave, a god in bonds;  
The summit-flower of all created life  
Is its union with divinity,  
In essence, yet existence separate.  
If heaven and all its stars depend on earth,  
Then may eternity upon time; but earth's  
A crumb of heaven, and time an atom sole  
Of eternity: neither pends on other; both  
One essence being, emanant from God,  
Whose flowings forth are aye and infinite.  
One only truth hath consequence, God's truth  
Inspired in man. The world may act,  
Believe, bless, curse it's way as best it lists;  
Expend a vain life solemnizing points  
Uncertain as the site of Paradise  
(Or Hades' area: one thing sure to us;  
Whate'er we expect in time or place to be,  
No future disappointment can be more  
Than that we are now to ourselves. We make our hearts  
Centres of all hopes, powers, rewards; nor deign  
Scarcely to circumscribe our life, so vast  
The thought of our own merit, remembering not  
That, solely as its imaginary, exists;  
This, only as intelligible, and not  
Substantial; draw life therefore as we may  
It fails to match the true invisible,—  
Pure, as some virgin visionary's dream  
Of sanctity, still consociable with love,  
Or perfect faith's regenerative wave;—  
Whereafter we contend. It is come to this.  
One state of life with me hath passed away.  
Aught henceforth that may matter be of doubt,  
To me is indifferent, not of interest. I  
That only love that's certain. Me no more  
The spirits of the bright impalpable life  
Shall throng round as the wind some mountain-top;  
Nor watery lightfulness of ghostly eyes,  
Belonging heavenly forms informed with light,  
Impose their spell of record under pain.  
The inspiration quits me; it is gone  
Like a retreating army from the land  
It twice hath wasted; the long gleaming mass

Snakelike, at last hath wound itself away,  
 And left me weak and wretched. None again  
 Of all the starry tribes of museful mien  
 Shall visit me; their leave revoked, henceforth,  
 Restricted to perfection, earth they quit.  
 True, albeit, I loved them more than life.  
 I felt myself made sacred by their touch;  
 But they are gone, and there is nought on earth  
 Left with their beauty comparable. It seems  
 I held me wholly assured; discrediting  
 Once and for aye all doubts. What doubts forsooth,  
 And all hell's hosts obscure, grief generative,  
 Should henceforth shake me? Fiery shadows, hence!  
 I have outbraved ye once: I scorn ye now.  
 Is't not enough that I to myself have sworn,  
 All things to acquit for one; truth's needled rays  
 For truth's one sphere; the mean for the supreme;  
 The dubitable power for that orb-throned?  
 I have, yet is not soul God's echo. Mind  
 And matter are proportioned in all worlds  
 The father they and mother of all things.  
 And earth hath favour over crowds of stars.  
 Earth let me then reseek. It suits not now  
 To plunge in pleasure, or to passion stoop,  
 The lion-honey of the heart which speaks,  
 And dwells in, life corrupted. Thirst no more  
 For lore, or joy, the heart distracts, nor meet  
 I' the brain with dizzying mixture, they. Be it mine  
 To hope not yet all things concludse; nor fate's  
 Broad arrow sped, but from its living bow  
 God's lips, defixed, may yet to sheaf return.  
 If suffering expiated offence, then they  
 Who have suffered most, have most maybe, atoned.  
 Earth-like, the heart must bide all change ere yet  
 The heaven-life form within it, and we feel  
 Midst all the world's delights, and life's desires  
 That chastity of heart which loves but God.

*Lucifer.* Lo! I am one who waits not to be sought.  
 It is from this mighty orb, Time's solar brood,  
 How many or how far soe'er, are born;  
 And here, if chance or destiny hath bade  
 Converge our courses, it were doubtless well.

*Festus.* Would I could well reply to word of thine.

*Lucifer.* All mysteries once I warned thee thou shouldst  
 ken,  
 Nor mazèd stand at aught: that promise now  
 I honour; and will show thee thou hast been  
 Thyself the all thou seest. Ere every birth,  
 The spirit, baptized into forgetfulness,  
 Sloughs off the oppressive consciousness of years,

Soul-saddening as with thunderstorms of thought.  
 But leave is mine and power devolved of God,  
 With reminiscence of Time's foresped tides,  
 Thy memory to endow; and from the passed  
 Evoke eternal pictures; for the world  
 Itself is but an outline manifold,  
 And surface of true essence. Underneath  
 That superficial veil is nought but God.

*Festus.* Draw it and die.

*Lucifer.* Not yet. It irks not me  
 That thou wouldst aye, from this to that extreme,  
 Hie with a footstep as of polar light,  
 All sequence mocking; urgent when the passed,  
 Then calling on the future. But this sun,  
 All life, hath its set service. Be it now  
 Mine own to show what hath been, and the soul,  
 Here doting on the merest chance of death,  
 Its prouder pre-existence, angel-mate  
 Of immortality, all time foregone.  
 Souls are not new created, hour by hour,  
 Like rain-drops; but immortal in the heavens  
 From form to form pass through eternity.  
 And now what seest thou?

*Festus.* Surely, in yonder shape  
 I see approaching, purer, lovelier, her  
 Whose spirit enshrined in beauty's crescent star,  
 With bliss intense lit up my heart; my soul  
 Steeped in the pearly radiance of her smile;  
 But here of loftier and more grand aspect,  
 Nor now by inmost shadows saddened. Speak,  
 Transcendent spirit; and whom thou seekest say;  
 Or wherefore here.

*Angela.* The life of all that's good  
 Is one perpetual progress. Every thought  
 That strengthens, purifies, exalts a mind,  
 Betters the soul so blessing.

*Festus.* Spirit benign!  
 Such progress is perfection. It is the power  
 Of man's perfectibility gives earth  
 Capacity of heaven. And thou hast left  
 You orb celestial, for this throne of light,  
 Throne than all empires wider; but while thou  
 Art here of right and fitness, I of mere  
 Permission come, and momentary choice.

*Angela.* To will and to permit with one whose will,  
 Creative even of all obstructive force,  
 Is irresistible, were nought but one.

*Festus.* Thou, too, mine angel guardian!

*Guardian Angel.* Wheresoe'er  
 Thou art am I, or far or nigh, to ward  
 From woe, to watch 'gainst evil, or to warn.

But let the fates proceed. Here all is safe ;  
 Here, 'neath yon mighty ruler, like a god  
 Blessing his worshippers ; for he is found  
 Most blessing who most serves in godly love.

*Lucifer.* Yon servant-lord, chained doubtless to his  
 throne ;

Such empery be not mine ?

*Angela.* Nay, see, he comes.

*Guardian Angel.* Lo ! Ouriel, regent spirit of the sun.

*Ouriel.* Were I sole servant of the universe,  
 As of one starry family, not then  
 Could I the pride admit thou feelest, fiend,  
 In ruling or in ruining one poor soul.  
 The glory of kingship is humility.  
 Hence knowing every star, for light is here  
 No more obstructive to angelic eye,  
 Than night to man's, I know all ; and beside,  
 Hear angel-whispers in remotest heavens ;  
 O'er all, God's will, how strange soe'er, embrace ;  
 And blazon on my breast his holy law.  
 Whatever its requirements, here obeyed,  
 Do that ye came for hither. It is fate.  
 Fate is God's spoken law, and age by age  
 Concurrent with his written ripely fulfilled.

*Guardian Angel.* A life, a moment, all is doomed of God ;  
 The aged growth of empire and the fall  
 Ephemeral of a flower.

*Angela.* That all are here,  
 Hosts of the blessed know ; and for what end  
 Thou, man ! shalt learn ; and with profound surprise  
 The volumed ages of the soul unseal,  
 Time's growth concentric reaping at one glance.

*Festus.* Hold we, then, passed and future in ourselves ?

*Angela.* Truly. Thy future lightly once I limned,  
 Leave given, but just so far ; and now thy passed,  
 In shadowy visions, rimmed or cored with light,  
 I call before thee as in painted clouds.

*Festus.* Spirit of power, thy teaching wait we ; all  
 Time's marvellous lore of eld thy tenderness  
 How amiable I know, attempering truth ;  
 For as some primæval stream, earth-nourishing once,  
 Whose giant bed a continent here conceals,  
 Seas here obliterate, by no living land  
 Named, nor its tideway ; but whose course, still graved  
 Hither as yond, in monumental marl,  
 'Neath isle, main, mainland lurks, my heart's first flow  
 Of love, though since, by worlds of life, and ebb  
 Of years immemorable, as seems, oppressed,  
 I yet retrace, and footsteps of the flood.

*Angela.* Forget not ; but remember too, how once

On earth the fatal mystery thou besought'st me,  
Unconscious what that mystery then comprised,  
To ope of thine own nature, while death's seal,  
Inviolable upon our natal sphere.

Yet iced my lips: and now wouldst know it still?

*Festus.* Spirit of beauty, who so late hast known  
Death, man's penultimate fate:—O humbled Death!  
Inevitable shadow, lackeying life:

Archer, who sinnest never from thy mark!

By God's grace conquered now,—speak on, nor cease.

*Angela.* God, when he made the heavens precede the  
earth,

Made in them all celestial substances,  
Angel and spirit and life-intelligence,  
And soul, if deathless, pre-existent; all  
With power of gradual perfectness enriched,  
That by successive sense of spheral life,  
Refined to common godhood, they might gain  
Original bliss. To mortals of thine orb,  
Ere now, though few and by full many an age  
Sundered, hath he the world-wide wave of light,  
From memory's fount revealed, that sage and seer,  
And now thyself mightst learn therefrom to live,  
By teaching truth from good, and good from truth,  
The spiritual sunlife of the soul.

*Festus.* The air thy breath doth hallow feels to me  
Vital with light of truth.

*Angela.* Truth's holy beam  
Disperseth passion, as the moon full orbed  
The clouds below her dissipates. Seek henceforth  
The soul to purify from mortal love  
By an immortal passion. Let no aim  
Less than celestial fix thine eye; for soul,  
Though pre-essential in a bygone sphere,  
Or future form, shows still direct from God.

*Guardian Angel.* God's providential fates towards earth  
and man  
Have yet to be consummed; and these comprise  
More than perchance thou knowest.

*Ouriel.* One element  
Subtracted from the universe, all is death.  
All forms material fade; all signs, all modes,  
All shapes. The shows of mightiest things shall pass;  
And nothing but essential deity  
Be and remain.

*Lucifer.* The element I foresee  
To be withdrawn, seems strangely akin to life;  
And this to me pertains. The end is nigh.  
God justifies my purpose, and permits  
Herein my action. Life or death, what now  
Matters, to me, or any? All are doomed.

*Guardian Angel.* We, irrespective of each other's course,  
Work, and one only knoweth how all ends.

*Lucifer.* This know I, that I reck not of the passed.  
And for this soul elect, I long have feared  
To watch him was spilt time. One trial more !  
But Lord ! my spirit expands ; I long to test  
Nations at once ; a generation ; a race.

*Guardian Angel.* So be it. The generation now to be  
swept  
From life, in fleshly mould, by earth's dread doom,  
The spirits of total man's terrestrial strain,  
He added, whom I still tend on, God permits,  
As he from first vouchsafed to approve to all,  
And thee, divulsive of the world of life,  
Its kind and end. Counsel divine I speak.  
Those souls secure who prove by sovereign grace  
God's will not to necessity thrall, but he,  
Lord even of destiny, and source of fate.

*Angela.* Here, 'mid this world-vast granary of light,  
Where the sun's fruitful rays are harvested,  
Sit we, and thy passed being's shadowy scenes  
See, silent ; listening to the tongue of time.

*Festus.* Silent ? Then these be mysteries ?

*Guardian Angel.* Holy, grand !

*Lucifer.* They to their solar secrets ; I to mine ;  
And mine intents ; in number 'minishing,  
In nature greatening. Ye will follow soon.

*Guardian Angel.* Fear not, but I attend him all due  
times.

## XXXI.

Earth regained,  
And lone sea-shore where the great waves come in  
Frothed like a horse put to his heart-burst speed,  
Sobbing up-hill, note we, his ends frustrate,  
How evil, who liar, accuser, tempter, known  
Deceiver proven, his title of murderer to earn  
Man's hater, God's most, works his victim's death,  
Reckless of promised boons ; ingrate ! Fell deed ;  
By guardian powers of good to good o'erruled.  
Struck thrice by loved one's death, give sorrow way,  
What fleshly gods, or perishable, can yield  
The heart consoling ? Fly to solitude.  
Only the desert can drink up love's tears.

*Garden and Bower by the Sea. Evening.*

ELISSA, LUCIFER ; afterwards FESTUS.

*Elissa.* God, by whose elements holy and undefiled  
I, too, clear-lifed as they, now stand, nor shrink

These primal powers to face unveiled, and mix  
 Awelent, with nature's grand integrities,  
 Of no sin conscious: how else dare I breathe  
 This air æthereal, vivid, which thy throne  
 Circling, to us from far descends, peace-winged:—  
 How tread this earth thy cloudy feet o'erpace,  
 Unwearyable:—this tameless, termless sea,  
 Heaven imaging,—like the eternal mind which made,  
 Embosoming in reflection all its works—  
 How, confident, bear to embrace,—I, hopeful e'er  
 'Neath thy strong guard to abide, could I not now  
 In vital contact with the infinite mind,  
 Through innocence, thee, pure Lord, seek? Hear!—and  
 grant

That while with these and thee at one, the soul,—  
 Accepted, suffering with you sun, baptized  
 To daily death, which yet from burying bath  
 Rises regenerate, and to awakening worlds  
 Shows as the light immortal,—may, itself  
 A morning ray shot forth, at eve, resumed  
 By the world-quickenning spirit whose beams are life,  
 Eye, undisturbed, its end, and so with dread  
 No more than scathe, the mortal change endure  
 Which trains us towards perfection; and, in turn  
 Our atomic to the life celestial adds;  
 Our instant to the eternal. I, by dreams  
 Divining, and night's palpable visions, know  
 Joy unexpected and reunion blessed,  
 With strange premonishment of death, confuse  
 My soul as though were sought a sacrifice  
 Of one assured best of the offerer's love,  
 And dearest the demanding deity. Strange,  
 This struggle of free emotion and fixed faith.  
 Come, Festus, let me think, my love, on thee!  
 Why art thou thus away from me so long?  
 I have whispered it unto the southern wind,  
 And charged it with my love: why should it not  
 Carry that love to thee as air bears light?  
 And thou hast said I was all light to thee.  
 The stars grow brighter together, and for aye,  
 Loverlike, watch each other; and though apart,  
 Like us, they fill each other's eyes with love  
 And beauty: but mine only fill with tears.  
 Oh! life were nothing without love; and love  
 What without love's embrace? Haste, haste thee, love.

One taste of thy dewy lips, my love,  
 Would far more gladden me  
 Than a draught of the waters, in heaven above,  
 Of immortality.  
 Then oh come hither to me, my love!  
 Back to this bosom, dear;

It is burning for thee, though thy love be dead,  
Widow-like on her lord's death-bier.

One touch of thy gentle hand, sweet feere !  
One glance of thy glowing eye,  
One pitying word, oh, one pardoning tear,  
And I've nothing to do but to die ;  
But to die in the bliss of thy breast, my love,  
Like a flower to the gods which is given ;  
That was happy in life, and is holy in death,  
For it dies on an altar of heaven.

And be it that I should die, and whencesoe'er,  
My life, love, I bequeath to thee, that thine  
Redoubling, I may always live with thee.  
Nay, but I feel I am dying ; and dreams too true.  
This sense of life-loss ! From out the firmament  
Of visible things, my life fast faints away  
Into dim nothingness ; nature's self my fate  
Prefiguring in the mid-day moon I marked,  
This noontide, stealing nightwards. And, as ghost  
Caught tampering with the truth, and straight dismissed  
By some austere exorcist, shuddering, turns  
Its shadowy face to Hades, never more  
With man to mix, nor earth's familiar scenes  
Haunt, once so cherished ; but bidden prepare for pains  
Soul-bracing, while they rack, and richening fines,  
Would yet life lavish in one exhaustive gaze  
On things too dear ; so I, forewarned this world  
To quit, quit still reluctant ; while as yet,  
Like a morn-loitering masquer tracked and mocked  
By the tell-tale light, who hopes, yet dreads his home,  
I, all-while conscious of divine love lost  
For human, blame my heart. Heart ! thou that makest me  
Live, 'tis thou killest. Let me but, ere I die  
See him I love. He must know how I love him.  
Festus ! come to me. I do think I am dying :  
I see him,—in brain-sight, him coming to me now ;  
Now he is thinking of me, loving me ;  
He sees me—flies to me half out of breath ;  
His hand is on my arm—he looks on me ;  
And puts my long locks backwards—God ! thy ban  
Lies upon waking dreams. To weep and sleep :  
Dream—wake, and find one's only one hope false,  
Is what we can brook, for we do endure it,  
And bear with heaven still. Nigh one year ago,  
I watched that large bright star, much where 'tis now :  
Time hath not touched its everlasting lightning,  
Nor dimmed the glorious glances of its eye ;  
Nor passion clouded it, nor any star  
Eclipsed ; it is the leader still of heaven.  
And I who loved it then can love it now ;

But am not what I was, in one degree.  
 Calm star ! who was it named thee Lucifer,  
 From him who drew the third of heaven down with him ?  
 Oh ! it was but the tradition of thy beauty !  
 For if the sun hath one part, and the moon one,  
 Thou hast the third part of the host of heaven—  
 Which is its power—which power is but its beauty !

*Lucifer.* It was no tradition, lady, but of truth !

*Elissa.* I thought we parted last to meet no more.

*Lucifer.* It was so, lady ; but it is not so.

*Elissa.* Am I to leave, or thou, then ?

*Lucifer.* Neither, yet.

*Elissa.* And who art thou that I should fear and serve ?

*Lucifer.* I am the morning and the evening star,  
 The star thou lovedst ; thy lover too ; as once  
 I told thee incredulous ; star and spirit I am ;  
 A power, an ill which doth outbalance being.  
 Behold life's tyrant evil, peer of good ;  
 The great infortune of the universe.  
 Am I not more than mortal in my form ?  
 Millions of years have circled round my brow,  
 Like worlds upon their centres ;—still I live ;  
 And age but presses with a halo's weight.  
 This single arm hath dashed the light of heaven ;  
 This one hand dragged the angels from their thrones :—  
 Am I not worthy to have loved thee, lady ?  
 Thou mortal model of all heavenliness !  
 Yet all these spoils have I abandoned, cowered  
 My powers, my course becalmed, and stooped from the high  
 Destruction of the skies for thee, and him  
 Who loving thee is with thee lost, both lost.  
 Thou hast but served the purpose of the fiend ;  
 Art but the gilded vessel of selfish sin  
 Whose poison hath drunken made a soul to death :  
 Thou, useless now. I come to bid thee die.

*Elissa.* Wicked, impure, tormentor of the world,  
 I knew thee not. Yet doubt not thou it was  
 Who darkenedst for a moment with base aim  
 God to evade, and shun in this world, man,  
 Love's heart ; with selfish end alone redeeming  
 Me from the evil, the death-fright. Take, nathless,  
 One human soul's forgiveness, such the sum  
 Of thanks I feel for heaven's great grace that thou  
 From the overflowings of love's cup mayst quench  
 Thy breast's broad burning desert, and fertilize  
 Aught may be in it, that boasts one root of good.

*Lucifer.* It is doubtless sad to feel one day our last.

*Elissa.* I knew, forewarned, I was dying. God is  
 good.

The heavens grow darker as they purer grow,

And both, as we approach them ; so near death,  
 The soul grows darker and diviner hourly.  
 Could I love less, I should be happier now.  
 But always 'tis to that mad extreme, death  
 Alone appears the fitting end to bliss  
 Like that my spirit presseth for.

*Lucifer.* Thy death  
 Gentle shall be as e'er hath been thy life.  
 I'll hurt thee not, for once upon this breast,  
 Fell, like a snowflake on a fevered lip,  
 Thy love. Thy soul shall, dreamlike, pass from thee.  
 One instant, and thou wakest in heaven for aye.

*Elissa.* Lost, sayst thou in one breath, and saved in  
 heaven.

*Lucifer.* Whatever my words, God's are true. With  
 him  
 Good heavenly, heavenly bliss, eternal are  
 While all created things, if to these false,  
 Perish ; perdition even perisheth.

*Elissa.* Thee one good deed I owe for.

*Lucifer.* With thy life  
 I now myself repay.

*Elissa.* But that still leaves  
 Me debtor.

*Lucifer.* No ; to thee the deed was due.  
 Time's orbit turns recurvant. It may be,  
 A consciousness of restorative power  
 Ingrains and gladdens all life. Not aught is lost  
 For ever. All nature knows its end, not less  
 Than source divine ; and I, by truth in me  
 Dimly refract, what may be from what must  
 Arguing, feel thou it is hast given me hopes  
 Of ultimate possibilities, scarce I dare  
 Breathe to myself in darkness.

*Elissa.* Hast thou hopes ?

*Lucifer.* Like the first shower which cooled the burning  
 plain,  
 Where Jove o'erthrew the giants, and high God,  
 Giving o'er dumb-struck volcans, leave to earth  
 To outspread her mantle green, the moss to nurse,  
 And dandle lichen, where he had e'er, till then,  
 Hailed rocks ; thy words once wrought a blessing here ;  
 And caused the indelible germ of good, howe'er  
 Minute, which cored in all create abides,  
 Spring forth to lightwards. Fruited it not in time ?

*Elissa.* Truly. Be all forgiven ; as now to thee  
 I pardon grant for this ill boon of death ;  
 If inescapable.

*Lucifer.* Fate hath nought more sure.

*Elissa.* The world is heaving with the earthquake  
 throes

Of some portentous birth, some form of power,  
Whose orbèd head is to o'ertop all thrones.

Am I not bound to live till that I see  
I have wrought for, longed for, prayed for?

*Lucifer.* No! thou art bound

To die. I, too, see darkness, only at times,  
As sacred night begins all things and ends.  
But here, thine end's too clear, clear as the lines  
Of fate, to palmist's eye, which cross the hand.

*Elissa.* I ever thought thee to be more than mortal.  
And since thus mighty, grant me, and thou mayst  
This one, this only boon, as friend to friend;  
Bring him I love, one moment ere I die;  
Life, love, all his.

*Lucifer.* And is't to him thou vowest  
Thy nature's sweets? Nay, then, this queenly life  
With love perfected, as yon gold gemmed vase,  
By lustrous flowers encrowned, all fragrance, makes  
An offering fit for shrines, a gift for gods,  
'Tis time were sent for sanctuary, on high.  
Thou judgest well. All but almighty I am,  
And have strained my strength to its verge to satisfy  
His heart who loved thee; gave I not up to him thee?  
Reigns he not even at this sad moment there,  
Or possibly may, and if he please, not else—  
King of the sun, and monarch of the seven  
Orbs that surround him, leaving earth alone,  
For the present; earth is in good keeping yet?  
I know he is hasting hither now; he comes;  
But may not see thee living.

*Elissa.* It is not thou  
Who takest life; it is God's, whose I shall be;  
And his, with God, whom here my heart deifies.  
I glory in his power. He'll save me.

*Lucifer.* Cease!  
As a wind-flaw, darting from some rifted cloud,  
Seizes upon a water-patch mid main,  
And into white wrath worries it, so my mind  
This petty controversy distracts. He comes,  
I say, but never shalt thou view him, living.

*Elissa.* But I will, will see him, and while I am alive.  
hear him. He is come.

*Lucifer.* The ends of things  
Are urgent. Still, to this mortuary deed  
Reluctant, fix I death's black seal. He's here!

*Elissa.* I hear him; he is come; it is he; it is he!

*Lucifer.* Die graciously, as ever thou hast lived;  
Die, thou shalt never, look upon him again.

*Elissa.* My love! haste, Festus! I am dying.

*Lucifer.* Dead!

As ocean racing fast and fierce to reach  
 Some headland, ere the moon with maddening ray  
 Forestal him, and rebellious tides excite  
 To vain strife, nor of the innocent skiff that thwarts  
 His path, aught heeds, but with dispiteous foam  
 Wrecks deathful; I, made hasty by time's end  
 Impending, thus fill up fate's tragic form.

A word could kill her. See, she hath gone to heaven.

*Festus.* Fiend! what is this? Elissa! She is not dead.

*Lucifer.* She is. I bade her die, as I had reason.

*Festus.* Now o'er the bosom of this death, I swear,  
 God's will and mine one moment harmonized,  
 I hate thee, I abhor thee, I abjure  
 Thee and thy works.

*Lucifer.* Who seeks thee other, first?  
 I can't afford to quarrel; but for the nonce  
 I am gone.

*Festus.* Away, fiend! Leave me. Mine Elissa!

*Lucifer.* Meet me in city or in solitude,  
 By sea, or desert where pale marble shafts  
 Stud the hot sands, or, fallen, earth's generous springs  
 Imposhumously, forewaste,—enough! we meet.

*Festus.* Thy bolts fall heavily on me, Lord! and fast.

*Guardian Angel.* O steeds of passion, whirl not reason's  
 car  
 From life's precipitous marge into the void  
 Of madness.

*Festus.* Sole in life!—save as to one  
 I may not think of. Let me 'scape the world.  
 O weary, weary world, hide thou in heaven;  
 Search out some nebulous depth where thou mayst leave  
 Thy holy ashes; I some shore or isle  
 In ocean's spatial distance, seek, where plunged  
 In penitence, this my burning heart, like steel  
 In the wave retempered, may, by solitude  
 Concentrate, purified, thenceforth the new life  
 Of heaven inaugurate, hallow, and all fates  
 Again face, grace directing, to their end.

*Guardian Angel.* By judgments such as these God calls  
 to himself  
 The soul he loves. Do thou thy spirit serene,  
 Meanwhile, by holiest place and saintliest shrine,  
 Wherein and midst the memories to them due  
 Thy spirit may raise itself to thoughts divine,  
 Untamperable.

*Festus.* Such comfort much I need,  
 Good angel! such restoratives. Bear with me.

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## XXXII.

God only can heal the bruised spirit, and yield  
 Peace. By the overthrown altar of a fane,  
 Foundation shattered, which from faith to faith  
 'Translate, e'er consecrate still stands, we join  
 In mystic worship secretly. Let us trust  
 All, worship, form and offering grateful. Stone  
 Untooled ; untouched, unless by nature's hand,  
 By man reared, solitary ; mound, pyramid,  
 Tower, temple, obelisk, stony cirque, and spire  
 To one fact witness, that as sun and moon  
 Fill, with their light, space, so twin truths man's mind  
 Through time possess ; God's onemostness, and our  
 Immortal life. To soul saved, time's no more  
 An opponent section of duration, summed  
 In separate column from the eternal. All's  
 Eternity, is concentric with our life.

*A Ruined Temple, surrounded by Sands.*

## FESTUS and LUCIFER.

*Festus.* Here will I worship solely.

*Lucifer.*

It is a fane

Once sacred to the sun ; since consecrate  
 To the Cross ; deserted now.

*Festus.*

It matters not

That false god here may have truly been adored,  
 Nor true God falsely served, nor by what rites  
 Life-hating, or life-nourishing, or with sign  
 Simplest of corn, oil, wine ; or fruit and flower.  
 The truly holy soul which hath once received  
 God's unattainable gift, the imparted sense  
 Of unitive life with him can hallow here  
 Whate'er the creed it holds ; not less what, late,  
 Of theo-human being, before all time,  
 And all incarnate emanations, priest  
 Or prophet taught these stones, than in times long gone,  
 Of mediatorial light, heaven's orbèd god,  
 Sunning, though feebly, death's black void with ray  
 Too sadly numerable. For me, albeit  
 The general faith sufficeth, and although  
 The worshipping crowd I love, the gorgeous rite,  
 The genuflective wave, the common awe ;  
 The scent of incense ; hymns and harmonies  
 Of the sanctuary ; yet knowing somewhat still  
 More amiable, the secret of the soul,  
 Commune alone with God, me, here behold  
 Seas, deserts crossed, to pour forth in this fane  
 Of old days, my soul's worship ; and to God

Give witness of earth's eldest, youngest faith ;  
Known always to the wise, if by them hidden ;  
Ere all theophanies ; destined all to outlast ;  
With heaven co-ordinate only ; base of all  
From the beginning, of all now sum and crown.  
Each orb is to itself the heart of heaven ;  
And each belief, wherein man roots his hope,  
And lives and dies, God's favourite. What if here,  
Of yore, before this shrine, the sun's pure priest,  
And all his prostrate worshippers, knew their god  
Fire-bodied, but grossly ; conqueror of the shades,  
Of earth bright purifier ; invoking thee,  
O sun ! as glory of air, and lord of light !  
Fountain and fane of heaven's immortal fire ;  
Lord of the upper world and lower ; judge  
Strict, incorruptible ; giving every land  
Just wealth of light ; due service from each soul  
Exacting ; showing all, high, low, like love ;  
King of the life to come, immortal ; soul  
Treating with purifying penalties ;  
Great wonder-worker ; seer of all the skies :  
The gates of whose house are the east and the west :  
The ever-coming light, bright mystery ;  
Sense binding, mind attracting, passion taming ;  
Light born, light generating, light all life ;  
Whom God begat on light which first he loved,  
Encircling in himself ; but who in shades  
Of primal night wast nursed ; whom all time's hours  
Attend ; whose travel beneficent round the world  
Makes one eternal triumph ; unto whom  
All earth is sacred ;—Yes ! O sun to thee  
One vast and living garden of the Lord,  
Watered by light streams, where the vine divine  
Fruits, inexhaustible, for the wise ; and where  
Shepherd of worlds, and harmonist of heaven,  
The music of whose golden lyre is light ;  
With pastures varied, thrives thy starry flock,  
Numbered complete, in spiritual perfectness  
Inviolable ; in multitude of days  
Deathless, as in thy years thou O nightlayer ;  
Whose car the elements draw ; from whom all signs  
And natural miracles joyously proceed ;  
Whose eloquent fire lights aye their starry heads  
That, in celestial conclave with thee ruling,  
Pour down, on darkness' crown, original light ;  
Whose gospels are the seasons, all thy twelve  
In spherul order and a chain starlinked,  
Through gods, kings, signs, gems, toils, tribes, messengers,  
Heroes and peers, the universe uniting

To thee in love, thy being's boundless law ;  
 Thy Maker's synonym ; his symbol thou :—  
 Whose offspring are the ages, and whose years  
 Links of the everlasting chain of change  
 Thou bindst us with, progenitor of spheres ;—  
 To whom time's azure serpent, starry scaled  
 And noiseless creeping, that its years now sloughs  
 In thy reviving brightness, and now lays  
 Its world-eggs in thine incubant rays, we hold  
 Hallowed, because of thee inspired with life ;  
 Whose quickening touch all life, soulless or souled,  
 Draws up towards thee all generative ; of pest  
 And death, dispeller ; life elicitor ;  
 World-navelled oracle, whose sensible beam  
 O'erpatent, oft the strongest eye blinds ; oft  
 Godlike, death-darting, life reclaims through the eye  
 Revolving universe and evolving. This,  
 The faith of honest ignorance, yet with sense  
 Of thanks for good received, and things create  
 Misprising for their Maker, in a rude  
 Shallow belief which gladdened not the soul,  
 Raised not, sustained, nor inly enlightened, passed ;  
 To a nobler creed transformed, that thenceforth hailed  
 In the material heavens but shadowy types  
 Of spiritual truths more solid ; and in shapes  
 Of hero and saint, light's natural qualities,  
 Truth, power and purity moralled ; in the sun  
 The source of all things through vast mysteries sought,  
 Their meaning and their end ; from thee, O sun !  
 Child of the infinite firmament, conceived  
 A filial god, laborious for man's good ;  
 Unwearyable on earth as in the skies ;  
 Hero and victor of the universe ; thou,  
 Who at thy birth didst slay sin's serpent brood ;  
 And through the foul stalled stable of this world's life,  
 The sourceless, circular, river of thy love  
 Didst turn ; redeem the soul of man thy friend  
 From death and hell ; destroy the dragon fiend  
 With the seven deadly heads, devouring life ;  
 Regain thy golden apples, paradise ;  
 And, to complete the mystic cycle, rise  
 Well proven, and approved of God, to heaven :—  
 Of whose divine end emulous, we, too, tried  
 By choice of virtue over pleasurable vice,  
 Though now by passionate sins distraught, and now  
 Soul-soiled by waste subservience to mean aims,  
 From God estranged, yet longing to return,  
 And brighten again the spirit by strict contact  
 With heaven's original ray, might sometime find,  
 Having here lived beneficently 'mong men,

Merited acceptance. Not sufficing this,  
Man's soul which speculatively had erst conceived  
The light unlimited, whose most ancient sheen  
Beamed forth man spiritual, angelic mind,  
Intelligent life, life sentient, and, less pure,  
Still from God emanant, matter, form and all  
This universe in its oval orbit holds,—  
The light intelligible conceived on earth  
Incarnate ; light, before whose orient ray  
The gods all vanished like night's ghosts ; light sole,  
Sun spiritual ; source not only of life and light  
Worldly, but soul-regenerative ; whom all  
The lives of all the elements, lamb, fish, dove ;  
Earth all productive ; life requickening air ;  
The purifying wave, perfective fire ;  
Whom all earth's faiths and creeds, rites, gods of old,  
Foreshadowed personate as a child of man,  
In precognition of eternal truth  
Made deathless ; whom and his, the world foretyped,  
One all-comprising prophecy ; the moon,  
Virgin of heaven, who nightly bringeth forth  
The light, thine own, O sun ! in heaven to earth ;  
Morn's herald star, imbathing earth in dew,  
And the sun leading into the desert sea,  
To his eternal baptism, ere with light  
He floods the world, and cleaves the breathing skies  
With inspirative fire ; earth, weeping set,  
Sin-shamed, self-humbled, like the penitent one  
Below his cross, the darkness of whose death  
Eclipsed all day ; these, and light's whole bright flock,  
Before thy crucial exaltation fled,  
But born of light, predestined yet to range  
In bliss the spirit-pasturing skies ; to quaff  
Serene, the waters of the sun ; and yet  
Catch his vivific secret, as he beams  
Resurgent, from the entombing wave ; that grave  
Thou, daily dying, dost, night by night, o'erpass  
Into the invisible halls men dread ; but whence,  
O Hadëan god, death-hidden in dark and chill,  
Eastering, again thou comest with joy ;—foretyped,  
All signs, all seasons, records but of thee,  
And of thy deeds divine and dignities,  
Soul-embleming : twin being, God with man,  
Whose doubled nature indicates in heaven  
Natural and spiritual ; who holdst unmoved  
The balance of the all-just One o'er the world,  
Well weighing work and faith ; with scorpion sting  
Treating the carnal conscience self-condemned ;  
Who bendst the heavens before thee like a bow  
And earth thine orb'd arrow shoot'st through air

Who from celestial fountains pourest floods  
Of grace regenerative ; who to thyself,  
Produced by thee, earth's twin chief boons of life  
Dost sanctify for sustenance and for joy,  
Symbols of soul and body, that both be known  
In him thou too but symbollest, God. But these,  
Enthusiasts of a composite creed who sought  
The impossible with too easy to imblend,  
And difficulty soul-bracing scape, but failed  
With speculative conceits to unreason faith,  
Learned liberally at last the simpler truth  
Whereby we recognize as one of heaven's  
Star peers the sphere we dwell in, and yon sun  
Know, too, as not above us ; we are upon  
The same proud level ; by the same laws constrained ;  
Of the like roots compact. Who therefore knows  
Soul-freed, all stars but steps in heaven's great scale,  
Up to God's throne from time's last orb which eyes  
The inner and the utter infinite round  
To that highest deepest midmost site where heaven's  
Star-music ends, for ever quelled in the sun's  
Silence supreme ; knows happily too, that through  
All spherul forms, the centre searching soul,  
Circling in bright expansive progress, fit  
To match the march of angels in time's van,  
By-passing all night's constellated chart  
Where God hath set his burning seal the sun,  
And all delights of merely intelligent life,  
In spirit conquests self-purifying skilled,  
Reseeks thee, lone and universal light,  
Spiritual, divine, deific ; even as at first  
Creative, all conclusive ; with dread hope  
Persistent, individually, to acquire  
Clear glory, and midst the all-involving heavens  
Share preapportioned rule. Now dawns the day  
When natural faiths and typical both outworn  
Man's spirit sight by eyebright of the stars,  
And rue celestial cleared, one deity sole,  
One spirit throughout the globe shall name ; one Power  
Beyond all being ; of all worlds sire and heir ;  
Sole Saviour of the world of life he hath made ;  
Whose breath from servile matter framed at first  
The fading frostwork of created things.  
Earth's tale is told in heaven ; heaven's told in earth.  
Since either 'gan, though thousand tribes have chosen  
A thousand types, one sole true faith hath been,  
The faith of all in God. Let earth, henceforth,  
To its right creed re-oriented, the faith  
Which, world-comprising, soul-sufficing, wise  
Spirits are taught of rational light,—confess

Things all may symbols, each of other, be,  
 Nothing of God. To this joyed eye, the hour  
 Already, hawklike, preens its wing for flight,  
 When all shall be remassed in one great creed,  
 All spirit shall yet be rebegotten ; all  
 Worship rededicate, time's degenerate lapse  
 Twice having fused the symbol with the truth ;  
 All dark things brightened ; all contrariants blent ;  
 And truth and love, perradiating all life  
 Be the new poles of nature ; earth, at last  
 Joining the great procession of the skies.  
 Now, therefore to the sole true God, in man,  
 In nature timely manifested, these walls  
 Shall echo praise, if never yet. Attend.  
 Bring me a morsel of the fire without.  
 For I a sacred offering unto God  
 Will make, as high priest of the world. He lacks not  
 At best hands, consecration, whom thou, Lord !  
 By choice hast hallowed ; and these elements  
 I offer, thou hast holy made, by making.

*Lucifer.* Lo, fire ! I wait thee in the air.

*Festus.*

Withdraw.

Eternal, infinite Spirit, hear thou, heaven-throned,  
 While one, by thy divine salvation graced,  
 A servant of thy boundless law of love,  
 This temple redevotes to a purer end  
 Than they who built or who abandoned knew.  
 Thine Lord are all the elements, all the worlds ;  
 The sun thy bounteous servant, and the moon  
 Thy servant's servant ; the round rushing earth ;  
 This lifeful air ; these thousand wingèd winds ;  
 Fire, heaven-kinned ; continental clouds ; the sea  
 Broad-breasted, trancèd lake ; and rivers rich,  
 Arterial ; sky-crowned, shadow-haunted hills,  
 Their woody tresses waving on the breeze,  
 Grateful, in sign of worship ; all are thine.  
 Thine are the snow robed mountains girdling earth  
 As the white spirits God our Saviour's throne ;  
 Thine the bright secrets central in all orbs,  
 And rudimental mysteries of sphere life,  
 Fire misted, nebulous. The sun starred night,  
 Day all prevailing, ever maiden morn,  
 Consummate eve, earth's varying seasons aye  
 Confess them thine, through the life gladdening world.  
 All art hath wrought from earth, or science lured  
 From truth, like flame out of the firecloud ; all  
 Man's thought, man's toil, man's deeds, his best of thee  
 Inspired, of thee foreplanned all nature, are  
 Thine ; thine the glory ; all of thee conceived,  
 Things finite, infinite, to thee belong,

As mountains to a world, as worlds to heaven.  
City high domed and pompous ; populous town,  
Toilful, and early hamlet ; all that live  
Or die : decay or flourish ; change, or stand  
Unchanged, before thy face, heaven's starry hosts  
Thy ministry of light, for thee exist,  
Or, at thy bidding, are not. Thine, all cause  
Evil, or best, of every orb ; all ends  
Forebalanced, yet preponderate so towards good  
As all events to adjust : thine Lord ! all souls ;  
Thought, atom, world, the universe thine ; thou yet  
Thine eye, all hallowing, canst as easily turn  
From comprehending the bright infinite,  
To this crushed temple, where the wild flower decks  
Its earthquake rifted walls, and birdlets build  
In leafage of its columned capitals,  
And to this crumbling heart I offer here,  
As trust thine own eternity. Behold !  
Accept, I pray thee Lord ! this sacrifice ;  
These elemental offerings, simple, pure,—  
A branch, a flowery turf, a burning coal,  
A cup of water and an empty bowl,—  
I, in man's name, make filially to thee,  
Formless, save kneeling heart, save prostrate soul,  
In token of thine all perfect monarchy  
And world comprising mercy, of us confessed.  
This air-filled bowl, of the world typical, thou  
With thy good spirit replenishest, and the soul  
Receptive of thy life conferring truth ;  
This, the symbolic element, whence, reborn,  
Made pure, thy chosen are first regenerate  
Out of men's mighty multitudes, yet all  
As of one nature be redeemed ; this coal,  
From the earth torn flaming, which thy mercy, sin  
Consuming, as of earth proclaims ; and these  
Pale flamelets, starwards tending, emblem just  
Of spirit aspiring Godwards ; this mere turf  
As the earthy nature and abode we would  
Subject to thee, here lying, though type obscure,  
Yet representative of heaven's every star,  
And world extended matter ; all these in one  
Sole, simple oblation proffered ;—last, this branch,  
High flourishing over all, let this, Lord ! sign  
Thine own eternal son Humanity  
On earth though dying, immortalized in heaven,  
Redemptive of all being ; the golden branch—  
Rootless in self, grafted only in deity,—  
Of life's eternal tree, seer's, sibyl's, word  
Inspired of old, full of dark central thought

And mystic truth, foretold should overspread  
The spirit world, death's every wound, with its fruit  
Healing:—all, offering, offerer, Lord! accept.  
Nor these of natural birth as 'neath thine hand  
Pure and munificent framed, hold thou to thee  
Sole acceptable; but these, corn, olive, grape,  
By sumptuous man manipulate into food,  
Whereby we strengthen ourselves to endure for thee  
This bodily life, and use as best we may,  
Deign thou to look upon, and so sanctify  
With thine all hallowing glance; for, taught by seer,  
Priest, hierophant of old, thou, walking earth,  
Shrinking thyself to shape create, calf, lamb  
Or kid, with angels and god-messengers  
Partaking, drinking wine and breaking bread,  
So tokening man's divinity humane,  
And thy divine humanity, we know  
Didst, in all forms of being, the force convey  
Of holiest goodness; thine essential life  
Pervading all the elements of the world;  
Thine actual all-presence in every heart,  
Lift choicefully to thee. So now and here,  
By usance of like signs communion whole  
Of bodily powers and spiritual, God! with thee  
Maker, regenerator, we ask:—ask, too,  
This gift, Lord! that if men can nought but sin,  
Forgive the creature crime,—fruit this of soul  
Imperfect, but by thee create, which takes  
From thee its whole capacity,—and bring back  
To thy breast world-parent! who madest the whole,  
And wilt remould all, purified, to thee.  
Wherefore, in spirit of this kind faith, baptized,  
Faith, world embracing, soul sufficing, faith,  
Wherein the vortices of all variant creeds  
As eddies in the sea are lost, let me,  
Let both Lord! gladden within ourselves; thou, God!  
Who joyest to view the living world, endowed  
As with thine own vitality, although  
Insentient of its mighty source, because  
Reflective of thine attributes; but man  
Most, as the living mirror, which conceives  
From thy vivific beam the rational ray  
Conscious, whereby we, cognizant of thee,  
Light of thy light, our crowning glory gain;  
Thou, thy chief joy. Exchanging therefore sense  
Of life undying, and sureness of the truth,  
Thine infinite unity, which doth underlie  
The world's wide walls, the truth which, uttered, opens  
All-where a paradise, to man colleagued  
In brotherly worship of the invisible one,

The spirit's revelation still p  
 Evolving all perfection — and  
 We bless thee, Saviour ! kno  
 In thee are saved, man, natur  
 In God triune : we know too  
 Divine, soul perfecting, the in  
 And antiformal, needs no wor  
 Whereby to mark its union w  
 For, kindled like a sacrifice o  
 By heaven's spontaneous fire,  
 In aspiration, being's highest  
 Save that accomplished in de  
 With God reunion. Hope w  
 Instilling into men's minds of  
 Man's richest heritage, and, a  
 'Gainst mortal things, that m  
 Thou, who dost all things rig  
 Joy, sorrow, suffering, power,  
 This heart which finally I to t  
 And here, this spirit enlighten  
 Godwards, let cease from pray  
 Save that which life shall offer  
 Be with me, Lord now, all-wh  
 Now go I forth again, refreshes  
 Upon my time enduring pilgrim  
 Ho, Lucifer !

*Lucifer.* I wait thee.

*Festus.* V

*Lucifer.* As thou wilt ; ap  
 It is light translateth night ; it  
 Expounds experience ; it is the  
 The east ; it is time unfolds etc

*Festus.* Enough. It is ti

## XXXIII.

As in our sky sometimes a vaporous mass  
 Low down, shows thunder threatening ; while by winds  
 Of happier, if adverse wing fanned, high up,  
 Unutterably extolled, a cloud-stream clear,  
 Tinged as with ghostliest silver, spreads, opposed,  
 Its shadowy waveletage, bespeaking peace  
 Prospective, genial change ; so here ; o'er man's  
 And life's concerns, celestial influences  
 Shed their serene constraint. Calmed by excess  
 Of grief, by disillusion purified,  
 We picture back life's simpler, earlier joys,  
 Pleased ; and contrasting with the sateless greed  
 Of knowledge, unbelief in love we had nigh  
 Ourselves discredited, faith in innocence  
 By passion spurned, self, magnified by eye  
 Invert, disloyalty to law once deemed  
 By us divine, it may be, all on earth  
 We count false, vain ; our part is played ; to live  
 We list not. 'Tis the new temptation's hour.  
 The last lure power is proffered ; grasped at. All  
 Hangs on the last desire.

*A Library and Balcony, overhanging a River. Summer  
 Night in the North.*

FESTUS, GUARDIAN ANGEL, LUCIFER.

*Festus.* The last high upward slant of sun on the trees,  
 Like a dead soldier's sword upon his pall,  
 Seems to console earth for the glory gone.  
 Oh ! I could weep to see the day die thus :  
 The deathbed of a day how beautiful.  
 Linger ye clouds one moment longer there ;  
 Fan it to slumber with your golden wings,  
 Like pious prayers ye seem to soothe its end.  
 It will wake no more, till the all revealing day,  
 When like a drop of water greatened bright  
 Into a shadow, it shall show itself  
 With all its little tyrannous things and deeds,  
 Unhomed and clear. The day hath gone to God,  
 Straight, like an infant's spirit, or a mocked  
 And mourning messenger of grace to man.  
 Would it had taken me too upon its wing !  
 Mine end is nigh. Grant heaven, I die outright,  
 And slip the coil, without waiting it unwind !  
 Who, lying lonely upon a highmost hill,  
 In noon's imperious silence, nought about him  
 But the clear dark sky, like to God's hollowed hand  
 On earth's head laid, but expects some natural spirit  
 Should start out of the universal air ;

And gathering round him all his cloudy robe,  
 As one in act to teach mysterious things,  
 Explain that he must die? that risen as high  
 As life can lift him up, as far above  
 The world as flesh can mount, o'er tyrant wind  
 And clouded lightning, and the rainbow round;  
 And gained a loftier, more mysterious beauty  
 Of feeling, something like a starry darkness  
 Seizing the soul, say he must die, and vanish?  
 Who hath not at such moments felt, as now  
 I feel, that to be happy we must die?  
 And here I rest above the world, and its ways;  
 The wind, opinion, and the rainbow, beauty,  
 And the thunder, superstition. I am free  
 Of all: save death, what want I to be happy?  
 Hell solves all doubts. Come to me, spirit of evil!

*Lucifer.* Lo! I am here; and ever prompt when called.  
 Death's such a favourite now at court, it seems,  
 He hath but to ask and have. Teaze him not yet.  
 How speed thy general pleasures?

*Festus.* Bravely. Joys  
 Are bubble-like; what makes them, bursts them, too.  
 And like the milky way, there, dim with stars,  
 The soul which numbers most, will shine the less.

*Lucifer.* No matter; mind it not. That joys of earth  
 Should turn to ruin of spirits is somewhat hard.

What are these, love, hilarity, vanity,  
 These secondary orblets of man's life,  
 And satellites of youth's all glowing sphere,  
 But natural luxuries, few indeed can shun?  
 They have well nigh unimmortalized myself.

*Festus.* Yet have they nought, base, impure, ruinous  
 Heart-harlots, wherewithal to sate the spirit  
 Which doth enamour immortality.  
 It may be, as to love, the feeling still  
 Is adamantine though the splendid thing  
 Whereon it writes its record, is of all  
 Frailest; and though earth, lovely mother, shows  
 To all the same blind kindness, beautiful  
 To see, she loves her children with, to me  
 Her beauty she in vain unbosometh.  
 It lists me not to live; for things may be  
 Corrupted into beauty; and even love,  
 Where all the passions blend, as hues in white,  
 Tires at the last as day would, if all day,  
 And no night. It may be, forgive me, God!  
 I am getting too forlorn to live, too waste;  
 Aught that I can, or do love, shoots by me,  
 Like a train upon an iron road. And yet  
 I need not now reproach mine arm nor aim.

For I have winged each pleasure as it flew,  
How swift or high soever in its flight.  
We cannot live alone. The heart must have  
A prop without, or it will fall and break.  
But nature's common joys are common cheats.  
As he who sails southwards, beholds, each night,  
New constellations rise, all clear, and fair;  
So, o'er the waters of the world, as we  
Reach the mid zone of life, or go beyond,  
Beauty and bounty still beset our course;  
New beauties wait upon us everywhere;  
New lights enlighten, and new worlds attract.  
But I have seen and I have done with all.  
Friendship hath passed me like a ship at sea;  
And I have seen no more of it. A friend  
I had with whom, in youthhood. I was wont  
To learn, think, laugh, weep, strive, and love, together;  
For we were always rivals in all things;  
Together up high springy hills, to trace  
A runnel to its birthplace—to pursue  
A river—to search, haunt old ruined towers,  
And muse in them—to scale the cloud-clad hills,  
While thunders murmured in our very ear;  
To leap the lair of the live cataract,  
And pray its foaming pardon for the insult;  
To dare the broken tree-bridge across the stream;  
To crouch behind the broad white waterfall,  
Tongue of the glen, like to a hidden thought—  
Dazzled, and deafened, yet the more delighted;  
To reach the rock which makes the fall and pool;  
There to feel safe or not to care if not;  
To fling the free foot over our native hills,  
Which seemed to breathe the bracing breeze we loved  
The more it lifted up our loosened locks,  
That nought might be between us and the heavens;  
Or, hand in hand, leap, laughing, with closed eyes,  
In Trent's death-loving deeps; yet was he kind  
Ever to us; and bare us buoyant up,  
And followed our young strokes, and cheered us on—  
As quick we dashed, in reckless rivalry,  
To reach, perchance, some long green floating flag—  
Just when the sun's hot lip first touched the stream,  
Reddening to be so kissed; and we rejoiced,  
As breasting it on we went over depth and death,  
Strong in the naked strife of elements,  
Toying with danger in as little fear  
As with a maiden's ringlets. And oft, at night  
Bewildered and bewitched by favourite stars,  
We would breathe ourselves amid unfooted snows;  
For there is poetry where aught is pure;

With love-like sadness,  
For much in youth we  
To say what ought to be  
And measure morals ster  
The bearings of men's du  
To note the nature and t  
To balance good with evi  
The nature and necessity  
To long to see the ends an  
Or if no end there be, the  
As suns look into space; 1  
Our hopes—our meditation  
One thing he missed 'twas  
Knowledge to please and g  
Yes, he is gone, and what r  
And if I have enjoyed more  
Love's but superior suffering  
Than balanced by the loss of  
And love, itself, hath pass'd  
Remains, who loves me still  
I feel? or but pure kindness  
How shall I find another lik  
Even as I had for her relinq  
Herself, that more than all, t  
And Death cast down the tot  
Though thou and he o'erthrew  
Her soul received; and the E  
Embray'd within its arms the  
The golden and the gorgeous  
A sunset beauty! A L. V.

Seems the great aim of life—the aim succeeds.

Here it is madness, and perdition there.

And but for thee I might have now been happy !

*Lucifer.* Why charge, why wrong me thus ? When  
first I knew thee,

I deemed it thine ambition to be damned.

Thine every thought, almost, had gone from good,

As far as finite is from infinite ;

And then thou wast as near to me as now.

Thou hadst declined in worship, and in wish

To please thy God ; nor wouldst thou e'er repent.

What more need I, to justify attempt ?

Have I shrunk back from granting aught I promised ?

Thy love of knowledge—is that satisfied ?

*Festus.* It is. Yet knowledge is a doubtful boon—

Root of all good, and fruit of all that's bad.

I have talked with elements, here unknown, of worlds ;

Learned the majestic language of the sons

Of light, and heaven's angelic kin ; and taught

By spheres impetuous hearted, mountain maned,

And wisest stars which speak themselves in signs

Too sacred to be explicable here,

'The bright articulations of their spheres,

Have summed the mysteries of all worlds with earth's,

And found in all one same and master truth.

And now what better am I ? Nearer God ?

When the void finds a voice, mine answer know.

*Lucifer.* What better or what worse thou canst not tell.

For good and evil, wherein differ they ?

Accrue not both from the same parent force,

As ripeness and decay ? Light, light alone,

Of hues how contrary soe'er is cause

Common and one.

*Festus.* Distracter of God's truth !

Shall not God's word, all separative, suffice ?

*Lucifer.* Thou canst not have lacked joys.

*Festus.* We seek them oft

Among our own delusions, follies, pains ;

Joys half accursed my soul hath writhed 'mong oft,

Like to some day-lifed creature in the heart

Of a rose, to him death odorous from excess.

*Lucifer.* Hath not care perished from thy heart, as,  
flung

From the apostle's hand, the viper ?

*Festus.*

Just like that :

All care shall cease in fire.

*Lucifer.*

Infatuate, cease.

*Festus.* Were act mind's mate, man had a firm hold  
now

On the immortal future ; but we turn

From either skiey end, star-garlanded,  
 Teeming with light, and from the spirit truths  
 Which crown all thought, to gauds and lures of life  
 All-formed, and beauty's eyes inspired with tears,  
 Or fired with mirth conclusive; and so lose  
 Count of those heavenly spheres we meant at first  
 To reckon unto the last atomic light.  
 But how shall these, the joys and cares of earth,  
 And life's vain schemes, appear to the great soul,  
 Which hath no friend, no equal save the world,  
 When all these constellated systems known  
 To the keen ken of science, space's depths,  
 And the whole mighty heavens that bind our reach,  
 Hang like a pale speck doubtful to the eye,  
 In unimagined distance? Is it thus  
 Ordered of God lest man's weak powers should fail,  
 And the round wall of madness pound us in?  
 Eternity! thou holdest in thine own hand  
 The casket of all secrets, death the key.  
 And now what seem I even unto myself?  
 Life's impulse ceased, we live on being's rebound;  
 As some vain wind, which having wasted life  
 In rounding mountains and their shadowy woods  
 Made lyrelike vocal, dies at last at sea  
 The sun sole witness, where deep-brooding spreads  
 The uttermost circumference of a calm;  
 So the soul struggling through life's death-clouds, ends  
 In the serene eternal.

*Lucifer.* It may be,  
 No life is waste in the great worker's hand:  
 The gem too poor to polish in itself,  
 We grind to brighten others. Courage, friend!  
 Hast thou not had thine every quest?

*Festus.* Save one.

*Lucifer.* Why not then rest at last, and life enjoy?

*Festus.* How can I rest while aught remains not tried?

*Lucifer.* Not tried? I proffer now the power thou  
 long'st for.

*Festus.* I have beheld my name writ in the book  
 Of life eterne; wherefore then tempt'st thou me?  
 What were a seat among the sons of kings  
 To him whose seat is with the sons of God?

*Lucifer.* Fate's scheme must be fulfilled. Salvation  
 though  
 Promised, is not achieved; and if achieved  
 Is still not life accomplished. Never known  
 To being create may fate's most holy law,  
 Till the day dawn of all fulfilments, be.

*Festus.* When God once speaks, his word for ever  
 stands.

Still let me well consider.

*Lucifer.* Justly weigh  
 All things. I have need to ponder even as thou.  
 Say he casts back mine offer. Still is due,  
 By thought or deed, the unknotting of the tale,  
 Some day. Accepts? Still well; the peace he harps on,  
 Be his, though not for long would earth's endure,  
 Without; and for within, I'll look to that.  
 Meanwhile, as on some stern and strife-ful day,  
 An age smote hot into an hour, that sends  
 Kings crownless begging, or an empire hurls  
 To popular deperdition, and its lord,  
 Rude dominator of nations, to his doom,  
 Comes night with limpening dews; and drives the crowd  
 Home, self-distraught with pale and panic fears,  
 Lest law lift up her ghastly head as stunned,  
 Not slain, or power imperial drown the roar  
 Of brute success, with muffled tramp of troops,  
 Stealthy, retributive; so be it mine, time due,  
 To enfeeble his spirit's triumphant temperament  
 With nature's sick forebodings, vain and vague  
 And vacillating emotions, which undo  
 All reason hath yet pronounced most stable. I hear!  
 Say but the word, and thou shalt press a throne  
 But less than mine, scarce less than heaven's; before  
 Whose feet earth's puny potentates may sue  
 For choice of slavedoms, and be all satisfied.

*Festus.* The paltry pittance of a world like this  
 Were not a bribe for me, nor all its crowns  
 Crushed into one tiara, but that thus,  
 By supersession of all earthly sway,  
 Autocrasie divine were mine; and man,  
 Knowing the power of truth and faith, might see  
 Fate, highest of all laws, and recognize  
 In mine direct complicity with heaven:  
 My will, my fate, God's fate.

*Lucifer.* So let it be.

*Festus.* I have had enough of the infinities:  
 I am moderate now. I will have the throne of earth.

*Lucifer.* Thou shalt. Yet mind!—with that the world  
 must end.

*Festus.* I can survive.

*Lucifer.* Nay, die with it must thou.

*Festus.* Why should I die? I am egg-full of life:  
 Earth's in her first young crescent quarter, yet.  
 I dare not, cannot credit it shall die.  
 I will not have it, then.

*Lucifer.* It matters not;  
 I know thou never wilt have ease at heart,  
 Until thou hast thy soul's whole, full desire;

Whenever that may happen, all is done.  
 Once again therefore search the scroll of life ;  
 Mark what is done : what undone. Lo ! in love,  
 Already twice hath judgment passed upon thee.  
 Nay hath not evil wrought its own revenge,  
 And death the only guerdon thou hast gained ?  
 Let then mere self-life cease. The heart's career  
 Is ended. With the world thy part is now.  
 The depths of feeling, passion, pleasure, woe,  
 The mysteries and dread delights of spirit,  
 All, thou hast sounded. Now behoves to live  
 The world-life of the future—last the same  
 One instant or for ever. Bury love.  
 The steedlike world stands ready. Mount for life.

*Festus.* Well, then—be it now ! I live but for myself—  
 The whole world but for me. Friends, loves, and all  
 I sought, abandon me. It is time to die.  
 I am yet young ; yet have I been deserted,  
 And wronged, by those whom most I have loved and  
 served.

Sun, moon, and stars ! may they all fall on me,  
 When next I trust another—man or woman.  
 Earth rivals hell too often, at the best.  
 All hearts are stronger for the being hollow.  
 And that was why mine was no match for theirs.  
 The yith is out of it now.—Lord of the world—  
 It will not directly perish ?

*Lucifer.* Not perhaps.  
 Thou wilt have all fame, while thou livest, now.

*Festus.* I care not ; fame is folly : for it is, sure,  
 Far more to be well known of God than man.  
 With all my sins I think I feel I am God's.

*Lucifer.* Farewell, then, for a time.

*Festus.* I am alone.  
 Alone ? He clings around me like the clouds  
 Upon a hill. When will the clouds roll off ?  
 When will sun visit me ? O thou great God !  
 In whose right hand the elements are atoms ;  
 In whose eye, light and darkness but a wink ;  
 Who, in thine anger, like a blast of cold,  
 Dost make the mountains shake like chattering teeth ;  
 Have mercy ! pity me ! for it is thou  
 Who hast fixed me to this test. Wilt thou not save ?  
 Forgive me, Father ! but I long to die ;  
 I long to live to thee, a pure, free mind.  
 Take again, God ! and thou, fair earth, the form  
 And spirit which, at first, ye lent to me.  
 Such as they were, I have used them. Let them part.  
 I weary of this world ; and like the dove,  
 Urged o'er life's barren flood, sweep, tired, back

To thee who sent'st me forth. *Bear* with me, God!  
I am not worthy of thy wrath, nor love!—  
Oh! that the things which have been were not now  
In memory's resurrection! But the past  
Bears in her arms the present and the future:  
And what can perish while perdition is?  
From the hot, angry, crowding courts of doubt  
Within the breast, it is sweet to escape, and soothe  
The soul in looking upon natural beauty.  
Oh! earth, like man her son, is half divine.  
There is not a leaf within this quiet spot,  
But which I seem to know; should miss, if gone.  
I could run over its features, hour by hour,  
The quaintly figured beds—the various flowers—  
The mazy paths all cunningly converged—  
The black yew hedge, like a beleaguering host,  
Round some fair garden province—here and there,  
The cloudlike laurel clumps sleep, soft and fast,  
Pillowed by their own shadows—and beyond,  
The ripe and ruddy fruitage—the sharp firs'  
Fringe, like an eyelash, on the faint blue west—  
The grey old church, its age-peeled pinnacles,  
And tufted top, whence, now, the white owl wheels;  
The oaks, which spread their broad arms in the blast,  
And bid storms come, and welcome; there they stand  
To whom a summer passes like a smile:  
And the proud peacock towers himself there, and screams,  
Ruffling the imperial purples of his neck;  
O'er all, the shadowy groves which crest the hills,  
And with descending clouds equality claim  
Of gloom; whisper with winds nought else knows nigh,  
And bow to angels as they wing by them;  
The lonely, bowery, woodland view before—  
And, making all more beautiful, thou, sweet moon,  
Leading slow pomp, as triumphing o'er heaven!  
High riding in thy loveless, deathless brightness,  
And in thy cold, unconquerable beauty,  
As though there were nothing worthy in the world  
Even to lie below thee, face to God.  
And Night, in her own name, and God's again,  
Hath dipped the earth in dew;—and there she lies,  
Even like a heart all trembling with delight,  
Till passion murder power to speak—so mute.  
Young maiden moon! just looming into light—  
I would that aspect never might be changed;  
Nor that fine form, so spirit-like, be spoiled  
With fuller light. Oh! keep that brilliant shape,  
Keep the delicious honour of thy youth,  
Sweet sister of the sun, more beauteous thou  
Than he sublime. Shine on, nor dread decay.

It may take meaner things: but thy bright look,  
Smiling away an immortality,  
Assures it us—nay, it seems, half, to give.  
Earth may de cease. God will not part with thee,  
Fair ark of light, and every blessedness!  
Yes, earth, this earth, may foul the face of life,  
Like some swart mole on beauty's breast—or dead  
Stiff, mangled reptile some clear well—while thou,  
Like to a diamond on a dead man's hand,  
Shalt shine, aye brilliant, on creation's corse;  
Whence God shall pluck thee to his breast, or bid  
Beam mid his lightning locks. What are earth's joys  
To watching thee, tending thy bright flock over  
Yon fields celestial? Mother, and maid of light!  
That, like a god, redeems the world to heaven—  
Making us one with thee, and with the sun,  
And with the stars in glory—lovely moon!  
I am immortal as thyself; and we  
Shall look upon each other yet in heaven  
Often—but never, never more on earth.  
Am I to die so soon? This death!—the thought  
Comes on my heart as through a burning glass.  
I cannot bend mine eyes to earth, but thence  
It riseth, spectrelike, to mock—nor towards  
The west, where sunset is, whose long bright pomp  
Makes men in love with change—but there it lowers  
Eve's last still lingering, darkening cloud; and on  
The escutcheon of the morn, it is there—it is there!  
But fears will steal upon the bravest mind,  
Like the white moon upon the crimson west.  
I have attractions for all miseries:  
And every course of thought, within my heart  
Leaves a new layer of woe. But it must end.  
It will all be one, hereafter. Let it be;  
My bosom, like the grave, holds all quenched passions.  
It is not that I have not found what I sought—  
But, that the world—tush! I shall see it die.  
I hate, and shall outlive the hypocrite.  
Stealthily, slowly, like the polar sun,  
Who peeps by fits above the air-walled world—  
The heavenly tief he knows and feels his own,  
My heart o'erlooks the paradise of life  
Which it hath lost, in cold, reluctant joy.  
I live and see all beauteous things about me,  
But feel no nature prompting from within  
To meet and profit by them. I am like  
That fabled forest of the Alp Pennine,  
Which leafless lives; whereto the spring's bright showers,  
Summer's heat breathless, autumn's fruitful juice,  
Nothing avail;—nor winter's killing cold.

Yet have I done, said, thought, in time now passed,  
 What, rather than remember, I would die,  
 Or do again. It is the thinking on't,  
 And the repentance, maddens. I have thought  
 Upon such things so long and grievously,  
 My lips have grown like to a cliff-chafed sea,  
 Pale with a tidal passion: and my soul,  
 Once high and bright and self-sustained as heaven,  
 Unsettled now for life or death, feels like  
 The gray gull balanced on her bowlike wings,  
 Between two black waves seeking where to dive.  
 Long we live thinking nothing of our fate;  
 For in the morn of life we mark it not—  
 It falls behind: but as our day goes down  
 We catch it lengthening with a giant's stride,  
 And ushering us unto the feet of night.  
 Dark thoughts, like spots upon the sun, revolve  
 In troops for days together round my soul,  
 Disfiguring and dimming. Death! O death!  
 The past, the present, and the future, like  
 The dog three-headed, by the gates of woe  
 Sitting, seem ready to devour me each.  
 I dare not look on them. I dare not think.  
 The very best deeds I have ever done  
 Seem worthy reprobation, have to be  
 Repented of. But have I done aught good?  
 Oh that my soul were calmer! Grant me, God!  
 Thy peace; that added, I can smile and die.  
 Thy spirit only is reality:  
 All things beside are folly, falsehood, shame.

*Guardian Angel.* Elect of spirits, of sinners God forgiven,

Soul of my watching, not in all things thou  
 Hast pleased God, nor responded to my care;  
 But lone and comfortless nor I, nor heaven  
 Would have thee.

*Festus.* Well I know I both have grieved.  
 But not thou knowest all things. 'Tween my soul  
 And God are secrets not consigned to thee.  
 Until I have assurance from his word,  
 Which maybe I shall never have in life,  
 I dare not deem me safe, nor sealed in bliss.

*Guardian Angel.* More, then, than this beseems me not  
 to say.

One lives who loves thee still, by thee estranged.  
 Give pure fidelity due meed.

*Festus.* Her soul  
 Walks but with God.

*Guardian Angel.* Nay, she forgets not thee.  
 But as when by morning moonlight, while round dews

Bead still the impleachèd paths, some thoughtful nun,  
 Whose very life would wither 'neath a name  
 Of secular cast, culls, with cold paly hand,  
 Buds delicatest, that these the shrine may deck  
 Of patron saint who hallows from his niche  
 The bosky pleasance, and at his marble feet  
 Breathe forth their premier odours; bent to joy  
 The just on high, she guileless thinks, with gifts  
 Of earth least gross, most savouring innocence;  
 And posing reverently the offering, lo!  
 She kneels! Heaven's hosts thrill stilly; and while heard  
 The heart-breathed prayer, transcending reason, in doubt,  
 God's watchful eye watch. He, saint, votary, shrine,  
 Oblation marks: and, all seen, each in kind  
 Pure, not reproves; but, pleased with patiently,  
 Smiles, inostensive:—so, this soul who yields  
 Her life-flower to memorial love, and lives  
 Elsewise in active virtue, known to heaven  
 May, though beclouded seemingly, abide  
 In secret sunshine all her days, and bear  
 A strengthening weight of blessing, not alone  
 For herself, but others, hope.

*Festus.* I hope. Thy words  
 Too kind are to deceive. Yet still I would  
 I knew my destiny. I may hope, not love.

*Guardian Angel.* But love's more mild reflection, such  
 as that  
 Tempered with love divine was always hers,  
 She feels, thy saintly Clara, and with thee  
 Fate sharing, such as life hath still to give,  
 Might yet communicate. This is the love  
 The heavens approve; this sole.

*Festus.* I doubt it not.  
 We may be reconciled;—united, never.  
 The end we aim at, her more sensitive soul,  
 Filled with the love of lowliest loneliness,  
 Will suit not, I foresee.

*Guardian Angel.* To her thou owest  
 Essayed reunion; and if there it end,  
 Her pure thought will thine own refine; perchance,  
 May sanctify the sacrifice both make.

*Festus.* Thou sayst what ought to be. Be it mine to  
 make  
 Meet reparation.

*Guardian Angel.* Prosper.

*Festus.*

Thanks!

*Guardian Angel.*

Farewell.

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## XXXIV.

First love recalled  
 Not yet reanimate, joy and grief disguised  
 Each as the other, neither gains, perplexed,  
 His way. Even they who play round wisdom's knee  
 Miss sometimes worthiest ends. Knowing no mean,  
 Ambition's high demands too close encroach  
 On nature's pious privileges. Not less  
 True tenderness rejoices to conceive  
 The happy evangel, world-vast, of God's love ;  
 His alliance with all life create and how  
 Heaven's mercy ends sin's mystery, as made clear  
 To the great gathering of the spheres, round God  
 Convoked ; and thanks with holiest warnings blends.  
 O grace forgiving, how in heaven divine,  
 How sweet on earth love reconciled ; how dear  
 Virtue in both ; though trode down or ignored,  
 Still precious, goldlike, as in southern isle,  
 Vastest of isles, to Asian continent  
 Rich counterpoise, o'er mount and vale and plain  
 Tribes senseless, salvage, tramped the o'ertreasured earth  
 For ages, nor its charm, nor value knew.

*Colonnade and Lawn.*

## FESTUS and CLARA.

*Festus.* Henceforth this spot be sacred ; here, where  
 first

I shrined thee, flower of beauty, in my heart.  
 None holier to the tribes of earth ; not thou,  
 Divine Elborz, now cold and crowned with snow,  
 Since rested on thy brow the ark ; but once  
 Peak paradisal whereupon God's sons  
 Of saintliest lineage helped the harps of heaven,  
 And joined each eve, ere rest the angelic hymn :—  
 Earth's first communion with the immortal blessed.  
 Not holier thou, though meanest mound on earth,  
 Nigh Moslem city of the moon, where, first,  
 After long severance for their death-fraught sin,  
 And world wide wanderings lonely, from afar,  
 Our great original mother him espied,  
 Tall as the crownèd palm, though bowed with woe,  
 Whom her soul clave to ; one whole age had passed ;  
 Nought more divine than demons had she seen,  
 More human than the ape ; when her hot tears,  
 And his repentant groans drew down from heaven

Permission for their dear reunion there;  
 The mount of recognition; hallowed, thence,  
 To after ages, by that blessed embrace,  
 Obliterative of woe. Come, come; oh come!  
 As in arctic climes Spring, wandering through the air,  
 His long lost consort earth, all frozen at heart  
 Finds 'tranced 'neath wicked winter's deathly spell,  
 Stretched corselike; he full soon by gentle embrace,  
 Warm breath, and sedulous skill calls back to life  
 His star-browed bride; she wakes; her stiffened limbs  
 Requickening, stirs; casts off the sheeted snows;  
 Trees, jocund with the loosening life-sap, freed  
 Through all their veinlets, don their greenery; birds  
 Their voice refound, in song each other greet;  
 And, like some hoary grandsire's wrinkled front,  
 Ridgy with life-long cares, touched suddenly  
 By infant's playful finger—ocean's face,  
 Dimpled by gambolling gust, lights up, and breaks  
 Into a running smile, and laughs for leagues;—  
 Heaven and all-pitying nature o'er the glad  
 Reunion weep their joy; so, found by me,  
 Sweet solace of my soul, I long to make  
 To thee atonement. Reconciled to thee,  
 All parenthetic passions sacrificed,  
 The world shall slip off easy from our hands,  
 And we not miss her. Long! how long I wait!

I wait for thee, even as the weary west  
 Waits for the evening star,  
 With whom the eternal promises of rest  
 And glory are.  
 I wait, as waits a storm-cloud in the sky,  
 The bow divine of peace,  
 Which bids the thunders and the lightnings lie  
 Down, and fear cease.  
 I long to meet thee, as earth longs to view  
 Icebound, spring's golden flowers;  
 Thy beauty soothes my spirit, as the dew  
 Day's burning hours.  
 As heaven's own light upon some sainted shrine  
 Where mouldering relics be,  
 Thou shinest in upon this heart of mine,  
 Sacred to thee.  
 And as a line erased some trace still bears  
 Of words therein first writ,  
 Which neither pen can hide, nor penitent tears  
 As 'twas refit;  
 It matters not what other powers around  
 Here graved their conquering name;  
 Below all depth thy love will still be found  
 Truth's secret fame.

Known to ourselves, we only share with heaven  
 The secret yet by me ineffable.  
 Lo! now I see thee coming, come, at last.

*Clara.* At thy desire I come, though hard to me.  
We have lived separate lives, unlike, unsought  
Each by the other. Wherefore meet we now?

*Festus.* Thee seeking in thy sacred solitude,  
I told thee I had somewhat to impart,  
Somewhat to ask; if asking were not vain,  
Which springs despondingly from dubious heart.

*Clara.* Time was it was not thus. But others came  
Whose tyrant beauty and more soaring souls  
Thee dazzled, me eclipsed. Already years  
Have passed since first we were, what now we are,  
Strangers.

*Festus.* I do confess to my reproach  
A friend too well forgotten, and thine image  
By time's colleaguèd forces with the world's,  
Effaced half from this monumental breast;  
And as the effigy of a saint, insculpt  
On alabastrine tomb some unroofed shrine,  
Faithless fiduciary, hath bared to moon  
And winds star-iced, wastes plenteously away,  
Thinned pitifully by the upper elements;  
Compassionate woods their leafy tresses strew  
Winterly, o'er it perishing, and bemoan  
In gusty suspiration; so of thee,  
My thought memorial, while impaired, had joined  
Well nigh for aye life's lengthening dusk; and now,  
Let but the passed be buried, where it lies  
In mine awed memory hidden, like to a blade  
Sore rusted, in its sheath, no more to flash  
In the grey air upon the eyes of men,  
And all the future is our own. One's own  
Resistless weakness 'tis which overcomes,  
More than another's strength. Oh! I confess,  
Oft hath this heart allured by glittering rites  
And sacred titles, and celestial names,  
Offered at others' altars, and decreed  
Wildly, profanely, negligence of thine.  
True, I have worshipped idols and forsworn  
The loving faith I owed to thee alone;  
Canst thou forgive? reconsecrate the heart,  
Rededicate the temple? Do not all  
Beliefs how far soever from God's truth,  
Circle around the same in mode prescribed,  
As round heaven's secret and all-central sun,  
The constellated skies? And shall then love  
Lack like justification, or in vain  
Plead the necessity of liberty?—  
For truly I was destined for this end,  
And in myself believed the most at first.  
For mortal knowledge, which is error, dies,

And spiritual truth alone outlasts  
 All nature ; love insensibly with heaven  
 Here blending, thither wending, thence derived.

*Clara.* Wert thou as I such need had never been ;  
 But we had lived serene and sinless here,  
 Aimless, save loving God and bettering man.  
 Nay, let it be so still, with thee, I pray.  
 As in a round wide view from some tall hill,  
 Central and isolate, it happeneth oft,  
 The furthest things on all sides eyeable  
 Are village temples tapering to the skies,  
 Be such, too, the horizon of the soul ;  
 And every ultimate object, unto heaven  
 Calmly aspiring, indicate its end,  
 And sanctify the limits of our life.  
 For as in gentlest exhalations earth  
 Breathes forth the glistening steams which, high in air,  
 Glow, sunlipped, into clouds of rosy gold,  
 Or seek again her breast in fruitful dew ;  
 So of our aspirations and desires,  
 Might we endow life's skiey calm, they all  
 Made retributive blessings, and a clime  
 Of love create about us bright and boon ;  
 An everlasting spring of holy good,  
 And venerable beauty. But, alas !  
 Men breathe forth passions which fall back in blights,  
 And stormy desolations, that defile  
 The sky-born streams, and flood life's fields with woe.

*Festus.* The evil in our nature we can act  
 Alway and utter ; but the inner good  
 Hath inexpressive boundlessness. Earthlike,  
 Each carries with him his own atmosphere,  
 Or pure or foul, where'er we orbitate.  
 Who knows himself in spirit, all things knows ;  
 As in nature even the atom and the all  
 Commune and know each other ; and as the slant  
 Invisible axis of the earth too fine  
 For fairy to find footing tiptoe, bears  
 All superincumbent continents and seas,  
 Mountains and air realms. Knowing thus, that once,  
 My own heart like a wizard's magic book,  
 Studded with spells despotic to call up  
 Sprite, spectre, and familiar fiend, must needs  
 Assoilzied be from every fiery sign  
 And fateful cipher, ere made safe for aye ;  
 Thee as a priestess pure of old seek I,  
 That thou mightst hold to me the holy branch,  
 Dipped in soul-cleansing wave, the branch of peace :  
 That peace thou lovest so well and both desire ;  
 And from thee ask absolvment of passed sin.

For as when the sun's light in some high-domed fane  
On golden altar gleaming, finds itself  
In face of something holier, more divine ;  
So on thy sacred soul heaven's truths, confirmed,  
Beam in subservient blessings.

*Clara.* If thou meanest  
That thou dost hope forgiveness, it is given ;  
Thine hath it been ere asked for ; always thine.

*Festus.* Bright soul be blessed. Take again thy name  
Unto thee ; sign of reunited love.

*Clara.* Name which because it hath lingered on thy lips,  
In love's pure tones full oft, always to me  
Is sacred. None shall name me so but thou,  
Thou only. When thou changest, that shall change.

*Festus.* Breathe not to me of change ; albeit I lived  
On earth, till like some desert builded fane,  
Though based on astral laws, she ceased from sight,  
Wasted by winds, worn down by elements,  
Smoothed level under time's insatiate sands ;  
Oh, I should change no more. Henceforth to me  
Be thou, thou art, the type of holiest things ;  
The symbol and fulfilment of all good ;  
Truth's promises and prophecies inspired,  
Bound in one saintly volume love-illumed ;  
A book of benedictions sealed to me ;  
A second covenant ; oh, a spirit-bride,  
A new alliance, sanctified of heaven.  
This fallible heart, enchanted long, distraught  
By charms of luxury, sense, art, knowledge now  
To truth's allegiance, and to thine returns.

*Clara.* 'Twas not for pleasure, power, or knowledge I  
First loved thee ; no ! but for thyself, thy soul ;  
And now I seek not these, I dare not have.  
As some great glacier from its icy breast,  
Expelling aught of baser nature, seeks,  
By this mysterious means, to purify  
Its visible essence ; so the saintly soul,  
Out of its high and bright vitality,  
Rejects, in silent scorn, those worldly taints  
And aims extraneous, which itself debar  
From inmost commune, and most high with heaven ;  
Why, then, thy spirit degrade with greed of power,  
Thankless, unblest, as I have heard ? To me  
This were forbiddance. Aught that clogs the soul,  
Or clouds its aspirations, I abhor.  
Be it not therefore that though one in heart,  
We are in spirit twain.

*Festus.* Nay, speak not thus.  
All things are full of presage ; winds and streams  
And cloud-shapes, which in heaven's inverted bowl

Forecast our future. The presage of some vast  
And world-wide revolution, nigh at hand,  
In a sonorous whisper broods o'er earth.

*Clara.* True, I have heard it. Would it were untrue!  
Hearts may be sad at parting, but at meeting  
They should spring light as birds upon the spray.

*Festus.* As stars the sea, thy thoughts light up my mind.  
Heaven's son am I, and am by heaven made free  
From all low laws and lesser fealties.  
This is the age that men are destined evil;  
But say not fate doth not fulfil itself.  
What if my cause before men seem askant,  
Yet is it straight as light in the eye of heaven.  
To God I am no mystery. Well he knows  
All motives; and my objects I avow  
Each night to him, who each morn sanctions them.  
It is not the world which makes me great. It is I  
Greatest the nations.

*Clara.* I foresee the end,  
In utter and inevitable woe.

*Festus.* True to my purpose, what if I be false  
To others, and their objects, it is nothing;  
Mine good, I'll hold it great and holy still.  
Have I not seen this among coming things  
For what seems ages? Knew I not the fate  
Out of all others? That star-studded crown,  
Which hangs as though a hand out of the air  
Held it before mine eyes, where'er I wend?  
Rather let earth and truth and all things fail,  
Than I fulfilling fate. Let these bring forth,  
Whose unbethought of duty it is to serve,  
Not reign, crown, robe and sceptre, the bright signs  
And constellations of dominion. World!  
Go, toss thy head and shake thy shoulders, like  
A horse unharnessed. Wars cease. Never more  
Shalt thou, blood-blotted brand, allure men on,  
To practice of thy fascinating sin;  
Nor crimson cloud-bath of the evening sun,  
The dreams of sleeping city or hamlet, dye  
With visionary death. Remains for thee  
Nothing, O earth! but penitence and peace;  
All strife composed. Wilt share with me this throne?

*Clara.* The only throne I hope for is a throne  
Which neither policy can found, nor power;  
Which never war can overthrow, nor blood  
Befoul, nor treachery undermine, nor kin  
Succeed to or thrust off; a throne upon  
The right hand of the Humblest. Praise him, earth.

*Festus.* I am at peace with all men save myself.  
My rule is safe; nay, warranted of fate.

*Clara.* Thousands of enemies must be thine even now.  
 No mortal man is safe; and least of all,  
 A mortal foe. The terror of a tyrant  
 Knows no distinction. If he does not fear,  
 He hates; and if he does not hate, he scorns;  
 And scorn and hate and fear are all with him,  
 And alike deadly; he, therefore, insecure;  
 For man by man, each slays him in his mind.  
 But this is not the future I, in heart,  
 Have dared so long to dream of. Even although  
 Thy will should vaunt immortal dominance,  
 To me it brings scant pleasure. I had hoped  
 New love to welcome like the morning air,  
 Which wakes the buds in roseland; and that still,  
 If like twin hands around the face of life,  
 Thou hadst a wider scope and bolder course,  
 Our end and object were yet one and same,  
 To note the hours, and years fulfil of love.  
 But now, since I this mighty rumour heard,  
 My thoughts, though many, are all sad, and cast  
 In one mould, tearlike. I behold them come,  
 The long, long train of states depute and powers,  
 Leading earth's empire after them. And now  
 Thy glory my soul's lord is like the sky;  
 Nothing is to be seen beyond it. Minds  
 Of lesser space may sparkle in it starlike,  
 But thine embraceth and outstretcheth all.  
 Nothing can wrong nor ruffle it, nor endanger  
 More than a wild bird's wandering wing, the air.

*Festus.* Faithful and dreadful like a lioness,  
 There spake the bride of empire.

*Clara.* Nay, I see  
 Thy triumph, and abjure it. Would I might  
 For thee disclaim it, even as for myself.  
 It is meat forbidden unto my fasting soul,  
 Unclean, accursèd. Thou canst not enjoy  
 World-service and heaven's favour.

*Festus.* Both be mine.

*Clara.* Choose thou between thy destiny and mo.  
 How great soe'er things being or done of man,  
 To be, to do, is less than to believe:  
 For to believe God is to know him love.  
 As on some hill at day dawn we see born  
 Of maiden light the sun, head of all worlds,  
 Who hour by hour exalts his own place; Truth  
 Instructing us the while it is earth beneath  
 Which rolls away; he, lord of time, in his  
 Eternal zenith throned, climbs not nor stoops;  
 So they, in spirit knowledge wisest, know,  
 As more and more the soul is purified,

It is their own deadly ignorance from them rolled,  
Which ~~opens~~ them to heaven, and to God's light,  
Unvarying and supreme, due ingress given.  
It is we who change towards him, not he towards us;  
As therefore is the sun, nor east nor west,  
Nor day nor night is, but all timeless noon:  
So, from the Lord of life unbounded beams  
One everlasting effluence which is love.

To gain this: to prepare for this, is all.

*Festus.* Sweetest and dearest, kindest, best of beings!  
Truth I have both to realize and impart:  
And would, while yet time serves, thy spirit enrich.

*Lara.* This vaunted future I mistrust, nor know I  
How 'tis of God secured. I fear to share.

*Festus.* But though foredoomed to lose thy late-gained  
love,

Fate I must follow. Said I not my soul  
Had taken up its freedom, and assumed  
The birthright of creation?

*Lara.* Truly so.

*Festus.* And that holding in itself the omnitude  
Of being, God endowed, it doth become  
World representative?

*Lara.* Well, be it thus.

*Festus.* Thus versant with an absolute life, the spirit  
Maken towards its end and great reward, in peace,  
Outpassing all earth's lesser joys.

*Lara.* Say on!

I would not have thy soul abase itself  
By one thought about me.

*Festus.* Nay, speak not so.

But love's career is over in my heart.  
A vaster sphere expands before me. Power  
And knowledge I can give thee for thy love,  
But scarce repay in kind.

*Lara.* I hear thy words.

The fragrance of the flower of life is fled;—  
Still let it linger where thou laidst it, here!

*Festus.* It is I who suffer. Suffer therefore me,  
While I am with thee. The sole love I feel  
That might have, that hath, blessed me—but what eye  
Can see the circuit of an orb at once?  
The orb of life, alas! is on the wane.

And much must yet be said, much yet be done.  
All things have premonition of their end;  
And mighty states exhausted of old faith,  
Have sought extremeest unction of the new,  
Which can alone regenerate. Nations now  
Stand sponsors for the right divine of man,  
To every blessing earth can give, or heaven.

The earth-flower closeth, even now its leaves.  
 Death's dews are falling. We are verging nigh  
 On sundown of time's universal day ;  
 And these be life's last vespers. It remains,  
 As promised by the all-granting power, to change  
 The essential for the real, and to translate  
 The virtual into practice. All that truth,  
 Mining her way through policy profound,  
 Secretes from masses skillless to commute  
 Force into power ; all that the holy bond  
 Of man's most high fraternity secures,  
 Is mine, unthought of by the obsequious world,  
 Unfeared, unprized. One right exists, one sole,  
 Whereto man's regal race, all times conceived,  
 Yields sacred loyalty, the right of doom  
 Divine, the destiny imposed of God.  
 God now elects a nation, now a man,  
 A child, maybe, a dagger, or a dream,  
 To work his will, and sanctify his means.  
 That mean, that man am I : the seal of time,  
 And closure of the canon of all kings.  
 It is the imperial soul alone can make  
 The sacrifice supreme. And as in spring,  
 By Nanking, courtly seat of T'sin's high lord,  
 What time the winds harmoniously inclined,  
 Tinkling the white pagoda's gilded bells,  
 Meet music make to heaven propitiable ;  
 He priest imperial, sovereign labourer, sole  
 With royal rights and sacerdotal crowned,  
 Who year by year on the rebirth of things,  
 Driving his furrow deep in earth both soil  
 And toil doth sanctify, and with the hand  
 That curbs a hundred kinglings, grain of life  
 Insows ; the steps of that bright tower then scales  
 In solemn solitude ; and upon its peak,  
 Struggles alone with heaven ; prostrate in prayer,  
 Heart scourged, and with confession expiates thrice  
 Those sins the sun saw in his golden rounds ;  
 Then of the stars inquisitive, by wise  
 And perfect intuition of the heavens,  
 And social signs, and seasons of the spheres,  
 The horoscope of nations, and of all  
 His diligent lands he learns ; and so descends  
 Vicarious, bringing with him prosperous days ;  
 So seek I, who have sown so long the seed  
 Of peace, on man's broad field, the peace of God ;—  
 Such may he grant ! The sacrifice be mine !

*Clara.* I wonder ; yet my soul its balance keeps ;  
 Not prizing, not approving all I hear :  
 More marvelling how thou knowest of these truths ;  
 And how the end of all things blends with thine.

*Festus.* God's thoughts are as a firmament of stars,  
 Fixed suns ; the heavenly truths which he inspires  
 Or we by nature know of him, the all  
 Revealed, all-hidden, eternal show to us,  
 Innumerable, vast : man's loftiest thoughts,  
 Even on his own destinies, as one soul,  
 Or volumed into nations, or as all,  
 Mind's momentary meteors, which, flashed through  
 Life's hemisphere illumine it, whose counterpart  
 Is death, heaven, what ? with but decadent light,  
 Gleam, yet are truly perfect each, each true ;  
 Eternal those, these temporal, not the less  
 Whose union constitutes the universe.  
 As when some mighty Mage, intent to know  
 Life's coming secrets, 'gainst the reticent skies  
 Wagers his skill, and notes how from the breast  
 Of tempting virgin by her side who holds  
 The golden cluster ; or his marital hand  
 Who heads the mourning triad, leap they forth,  
 The instantaneous starlets : or, from his blade  
 Galactic, trenchant, waved to save from death  
 By spatial passion, his beloved fair  
 With starlets girdled, whence full many an orb,  
 In meteoric nights autumnal, fills  
 In falling half the firmament with light ;  
 And thus from fixed and transient spheres combined,  
 Draws astral fate destructive, or of war,  
 Or death, deliverance, love, nay, what he would ;  
 So I, although in lowliest wise, forebent  
 To know, from God's fixed truths, and natural thoughts,  
 Which, like heaven's evanescent spherelets, light  
 Together, man's high brain, my destined end  
 Deduce, and future of the universe.  
 And weighing all these things, the sum I find  
 As fortunate ; for at man's, the native's birth,  
 The star of love, peace, power benefic ruled.  
 In mid-life all the houses of the heavens,  
 Law, science, power, faith, health, wealth, dearth, death,  
 He suffered, well or ill ; and when at last  
 Dying betwixt time's trembling lights ere yet  
 His eyes lost sight, he hailed the eternal dawn ;  
 Hailed prophetwise the ascendant sun, arch-priest  
 Of nature in whose law of wisest love  
 He had walked as faithful votary ; saw approach  
 His head to shrive him and his soul release  
 Mid blessings humbly conquered, he foreknew  
 His future rich with joys won, unconceived.  
 So the same star which led him into life,  
 His spirit restores all kindly to the heavens ;  
 And earth's vast horoscope is verified.

Wherefore let us rejoice together ; each  
 Congratulating on destiny divine  
 The other ; and the world.

*Clara*                      How sayest thou, then,  
Destroyed? Mysterious judgment, as when God,  
With ruinous fire from heaven, hurls down the fane  
Wherein his faithful worship; or salutes  
With death this holier temple of the soul,  
Sudden and swift,—no time for penitence,  
Nor prayer.

*Festus.* Arraign not I, God's deep decrees.  
I cannot tell thee all I know nor dare ;  
For wisdom seals the lips which wonder opes.  
The dread initiation into light  
Saddens the soul it hallows and expands.  
But thou because thou knowest much of truth—

*Clara.* What is it thou wilt tell me?

*Festus.* I have seen  
What ne'er again may be, nor e'er till now hath been.

*Clara.* Where didst thou see—and what?

*Festus.* In space. He took me there,  
Of whom I oft have told thee. Midst in air  
Was God. I'll tell thee that he told the spheres ;  
For the great family of the universe  
Round him were gathered as a fire : but we  
Held back ; and saving God, none did us see ;  
Though round his throne in sunny halo rolls  
A ceaseless, countless throng of sainted souls.

*Clara.* Say on, love! Let me hear.

*Festus.* A sound, then, first  
I heard as of a pent-up flood just burst :  
It was the rush of God's world-winnowing wing ;  
Which bowed the orbs as flowers are bowed by breath of  
spring.

And then a voice I heard, a voice sublime—  
To which the hoarded thunders of all time  
Pealing earth's death-knell shall a whisper be—  
Saying these words—Where will ye worship me?  
Ay, where shall be your Maker's holy place?  
The heaven of heavens is poor before his face.  
How shall ye mete my temple, ye who die?  
Look! can ye span your God's infinity?  
Hear, mighty universe, thy Creator's voice!  
Let all thy myriad, myriad worlds rejoice!  
Lo! I, your Maker, do amid ye come,  
To choose my worship and to name my home.  
This heard each sphere; and all throughout the sky  
Came crowding round. Our earth was rolling by,  
When God said to it—Rest! And fast it stood.  
With voice like winds through some wide olden wood.

Thus spake the One again : Behold, O earth !  
 Thy parent, God ! it is I who gave thee birth.  
 With all my love I did thee once endow ;  
 With all my mercy—and thou hast them now.  
 But hear my words ! thou never lovedst me well,  
 Nor fearedst my wrath : dreadst thou no longer hell ?  
 Dream'st thou that guilt shall alway mock those fires ?  
 That deathless death which hell for aye expires ?  
 Should all creation its rebellion raise,  
 I speak, and this broad universe doth blaze—  
 Pass like a dew-drop 'neath mine angry rays—  
 Blaze like the fat in sacrificial flame :  
 And that burned offering, when I come to claim,  
 Its scorching, quenchless mass, all I will pour  
 Upon thy naked soul :—canst thou endure ?  
 He spake ; and, as the fear-fraught words flew past,  
 Earth fluttered like a dead leaf in their blast.  
 Am not I God ? Answer me ! Hope not thou,  
 Impenitent, to ward my righteous blow.  
 Yet, come again ! my proffered mercy hear !  
 Rejoice and sing ! sweet music in thine ear,  
 And peace I speak : seek but to be forgiven :  
 Repent ! and thou shalt meet thy God in heaven.  
 Go ! cleanse thy brow from blood, thy heart from crime,  
 And on thy Saviour call while yet is time !  
 Now to this universe of pride and sin  
 I speak, ere yet I call mine angels in.  
 Draw nigh, ye worlds !—and, lo ! their light did seem  
 Before his eye paled to a pearl's dull beam.  
 Attend ! said God—o'er all he lifts his hand ;  
 Where will ye set my tent ? where shall my temple stand ?  
 And all were dumb. Distracting silence spread  
 Throughout that host as each were stricken dead.  
 I made ye. I endowed ye. Ye are mine.  
 Then trembled out each orb : thine, God ! for ever thine !  
 All that ye have, within myself have I ;  
 God, am complete ; full inexhaustibly.  
 I dwell within myself, and ye in me,  
 Not in yourselves ; I have infinity.  
 The everything in all things is my throne ;  
 Your might is my might, and your wealth mine own :  
 'Tis by my power and sufferance that ye shine :  
 I live in light, and all your light is mine.  
 Be dark ! said God. Night was. Each glowing sphere  
 Dulled. Night seemed everything and everywhere ;  
 Save that in utter space a feeble flare  
 Told that the pits of hell were sunken there.  
 Shuddered in fear the universe the while,  
 Till God again embraced it with a smile.  
 Divine delight responsive spread through space ;

Till like a serious smile, whose gradual grace  
Expands its soul-born sunshine o'er the face,  
Lo, all things made were glad. Come now and hear,  
Ye worlds! said God, the truth I thus make clear:  
My words are mercy, wherefore should ye fear?  
And straight, obedient to his sacred will,  
One great concentrate globe they crowd to fill;  
Systems and suns pour forth their glowing urns;  
Full in the face of God the glory burns.  
Hearken, thou host! thy trembling hope to raise,  
I to all being thus make plain my ways:  
God, the creator, bade creation rise,  
And matter came in void like clouds in skies;  
Lifeless and cold it spread throughout all space,  
And darkness dwelled and frowned upon its face:  
Chaos I bade depart this work of mine,  
And straight the mighty elements disjoin.  
Then light I lit; then order I ordained,  
And put the dance of atoms to an end.  
Matter I brake, and scattered into globes,  
And clad ye each in green and growing robes:  
Your sizes, places, forms, I fixed with laws,  
And wrought the link between effect and cause.  
Your spheres I framed; your stations, motions, planned;  
These compass fingers all your orbits spanned.  
Then formed I lives for each, which might inherit  
Will, reason, form, and power—not deathless spirit.  
Then I made spirits, things of heavenly worth,  
Deathless, divine. Round these from every earth,  
I gathered forms and features fit for love,  
Trust, pleasure, power, and all I could approve.  
One universal nature spread through space,  
Free, faulty, human, born for better place.  
To every spirit I disclosed my name,  
My love, my might, and whence all being came:  
To deathless souls I righteously decreed  
Accountability for thought, word, deed.  
Then every orb complete, along the sky,  
In glory, beauty, order, harmony,  
I launched. Souls, worlds did every thing possess  
Which could a mortal and immortal bless.  
To all the hope of happier state was given—  
For all I keep one common boundless heaven.  
Ye all have freedom, and ye all do sin,  
For ye are creatures: but ye all may win  
Life everlasting—everlasting joy,  
If ye do but the love of sin destroy:  
This only is offence; for sin ye must  
Not by my will; but weakness dwells with dust.  
Unless ye have sinned ye cannot enter heaven.

How shall a sinless creature be forgiven?  
 And by forgiveness only can ye claim  
 Hope in my mercy, trust upon my name.  
 I knew that ye would all to sin be given;  
 But I, even God, have paid your price to heaven:  
 And if ye will not journey on that way—  
 The truth—the life—what do ye merit? say!  
 Death is the gate of life, and sin, of bliss:  
 Mark the dread truth! but mourn your deeds amiss.  
 Cast off your guilt! abandon folly's path!  
 Turn to the Lord your God ere hell his wrath!  
 Turn from your madness, wicked ones, and live!  
 Take, take the bliss which God alone can give.  
 God, the Creator, me all beings own;  
 God, the Redeemer, I will still be known;  
 God, too, the Judge—the each—the three—the one.  
 Again the Everlasting cried—Repent!  
 To bless or curse I am omnipotent.  
 And what art thou created being? Round  
 That world of worlds his arm the Almighty wound;  
 The bright immensity he raised, and pressed,  
 All trembling, like a babe, unto his breast.  
 There, in the Father's bosom rose again,  
 Of filial love, the universal strain;  
 Strong and exultant—blissful, pure, sublime,  
 It rolled, and thrilled, and swelled, in notes unknown to  
 time.

Think ye that I, who thus do ye maintain;  
 Thus alway cherish ye, or all were vain;  
 Ye all would drop into your native void,  
 If by my hand ye were not held and buoyed:  
 Think ye that I cannot uphold in heaven,  
 In righteous state, the souls I have forgiven?  
 Be this a weightier task? with God, 'tis one  
 To guide a sunbeam or create a sun;  
 To rule ten thousand thousand worlds, or none.  
 Art thou not with thy Lord, O host of heaven?  
 Answered all spirits, Yea,—then first forgiven;  
 The primal covenant, Lord! thou mad'st with us  
 Is sealed and sanctified and fulfilled thus.  
 Go, worlds! said God, but learn, ere ye depart,  
 My favoured temple is an humble heart:  
 Therein to dwell I leave my loftiest skies—  
 There shall my holy of all holies rise!  
 He spake; and swiftly reverent to his will,  
 Sprang each bright orb on high its sphere to fill.  
 Glory to God! they chanted as they soared,  
 Father Almighty! be thou all-adored.  
 Thou art the glory—we, thine universe,  
 Serve but abroad thy lustre to disperse

Unsearchable, and yet to all made known !  
 The world at once thy kingdom and thy throne ;  
 Pity us, God ! nor chase us quite away  
 Before thy wrath, as night before the day.  
 In thee, our God, we live ; from thee we came ;  
 The feeble sparks of thine eternal flame.  
 Thy breath from nothing filled us all at first,  
 And could again as soon the bubble burst.  
 In thee, like motes in the sunbeam, do we move ;  
 Glow in thy light, and gladden in thy love.  
 Earth only, like a spot upon the sun,  
 Sullen remained in that grand union  
 Of joy, praise, harmony. Word spake she none.

*Clara.* Earth only had been chidden.

*Festus.*

Not alone.

High o'er all height, God gat upon his throne.  
 Downwards he bent : and, like a meteor ball  
 From Cepheus' hand we see, green burning fall,  
 God, as in pity, through the extense of space,  
 Again to run its e'er contracting race,  
 Bowled the all favoured but the ingrate sphere,  
 Which rushed like ruin down its dark career.  
 And high the air's blue billows rolled and swelled  
 On many an island world mine eye beheld.

*Clara.* And where and what is he, this mighty friend,  
 Who to thee, human, thus his might doth lend ?  
 Who bore thee harmless, as thou sayst, through space,  
 And brought thee front before thy Maker's face ?

*Festus.* I know not where he is. It is but at times  
 That he is with me ; but he aye sublimed  
 His visits thus, by lending me his might  
 O'er things more bright than day, more deep than night ;  
 And he obeys me—whether good or ill  
 His or my object, he obeys me still.

*Clara.* O Festus ! I conjure thee to beware  
 Lest thus the evil one thy soul ensnare.

*Festus.* What ! may not a free spirit have preferred  
 A mortal to his heart—as thou thy bird  
 Lovest, because it singeth of the sky,  
 Although it is as far below thy soul  
 As I 'neath an archangel's majesty ?  
 God will protect the atom as the whole.

*Clara.* Him, then, I pray : the spirit full must share  
 The truths it feels with God himself in prayer.  
 So guide us, God ! in all our works and ways,  
 That heart may feel, hand act, mouth show thy praise ;  
 That when they meet, who love, and when they part,  
 Each may be high in hope, and pure in heart :  
 That they who have seen, and they who have but heard  
 Of thy great deeds, may both obey thy word !

*Festus.* Unto the wise belongs the sphere of light,  
 And to the spirit world-compelling might.  
 Yon sun, now setting in the golden main,  
 Shall count me his ere next he rise again.  
 One farewell round I long to make above,  
 As now with thee this leavetaking of love ;  
 Once more to circle round the central skies,  
 And sound the silent infinite, where rise  
 Creation's outflows, and the new-born light  
 Smiles babe-like on the lap of ancient nursing night.  
 Would that the earth had nothing fair to lure,  
 Nor being more to answer or endure !  
 But I foresee, foresuffer. Bound to earth,  
 Wrecked in the deeps of heaven, in death's expiring birth !

*Clara.* Is all then over ? I ask not what hath come  
 Of those who once were thine, but fear, nor speak.  
 Fate brooks not to be questioned in the light.  
 But shall we part ? Is this ordained or not !  
 Or is the earth-star struggling still with death ?

*Festus.* Being of beauty, whose yet unfilled arms  
 Form an incarnate Eden, and whose eyes  
 The angel watchers o'er it—mine exiled,  
 And gazing on thee gainless—smile no more.  
 For if life's feelings flow not now as erst,  
 It is not that they are vanished like a stream,  
 Sun dwindled or earth drained, but that their face  
 Is frozen 'neath the world's wide winter. No !  
 The liquid lightning of thine eye no more,  
 Nor flowery light which blooms upon thy cheek,  
 Nor delicate perfection of pure form,  
 A breathing revelation incarnate—  
 Illumes for me the dusk of life. Night reigns.  
 My heart's poles now are fixed like earth's in heaven,  
 Shining in solid silence to the moon,  
 Starry and icy silence ; and all ceased  
 Their torrid oscillances. Once it rolled  
 In tropic splendour. Now experience treads  
 Deep in the snow of blossoms. Maid of love !  
 Were thy heart now free as a zoneless nymph,  
 And on life's race of rapture mad to start,  
 Like her of old, ere dropped the golden pome,  
 'Twere vain to me ; immoveable is mine ;  
 Still as a statue studying stony tome.  
 Unite we may not. In this fatal life  
 There is no real union. All things here  
 Seem of monadic nature ; and with God,  
 All oneness and sole allness lives alone.  
 Still even in this—time's age penultimate—  
 And in my heart's exhausted mine, I feel—  
 But I for ever have forsworn it—both

The magic might of beauty, and the fierce  
 Deliciousness of love. Yes! I must be  
 In soul, in sacrifice alone. Thoughts once  
 My masters, now in bonds retributive round  
 My soul's invisible centre titan-like  
 Hold I; and 'scaped from thrall to dominance feel  
 As liberated god of old who heaven's  
 Unbounded calm is eyeing as he returns,  
 Rejoicing the eternal's to rejoin.  
 I hold life's feast, death's fast indifferent.  
 There is divorce between my heart and me;  
 And I have neither bride nor brethren—I;  
 But I achieve my end—the end of all.  
 From this is no appeal to death nor fate,  
 Nor the just Gods; herein are all at one.  
 Love me not therefore now; but when with me  
 The great cessation happens; when the poles  
 Are icing, and this tyrant of life's realm  
 Totters to execution, and well-earned  
 Ruin—attend me; whether in the flesh  
 Or in the spirit be with me; and, mark:  
 One birdlike thought through death's wide void shall fly  
 Right to thy bosom home, the thought of thee.  
 Cherish it there as mine, and royally  
 In its snow palace. It will bear the gaze  
 Of all the star souls and the spirit stars  
 Which will the living land of light indwell.  
 I feel earth slacken in rotation. Time  
 Lays down his weary length, as though the work  
 Wherefore he had his hire were finished. Go!  
 Now there is nothing left for us on earth  
 Save separation.

*Clara.* Still I love thee, still.

Hast thou no further word?

*Festus.*

No, death alone

Is that I live for, ever in mine eye;  
 Death, white-robed doorkeeper of heaven, whose sword  
 Soul from the spirit severeth. For one,  
 In wisdom reinstated, and brought back  
 Into the sovereign presence, the golden soul  
 Which sees things as they are, nor as they are,  
 Only, but as through eternity they shall be  
 Known, justifiable, is thenceforth still;  
 As he who in the mystic caldron bathed  
 Immortal grew, but dumb. Henceforth am I  
 Death-mute; for all things else with me consent.

*Clara.* But this is not the end.

*Festus.*

Go! I have said it.

I am henceforth alone. My thought of thee  
 Above all passionate fire-peaks, and above

The sacred snowline of my heart where soul  
And spirit in extatic stillness join,  
Bides in perpetual purity. Farewell.

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## XXXV.

Our first, our last, by heavenly fates impelled ;  
We again meet ; warned by the Spirit progressive, learn,  
Not man's design, mere compromise of good  
With ill, nor ill's, infeasible most, approves  
Celestial polity. Reason's plea, here shown  
Of gravity less than virtue's ; virtue's, there,  
Convictive less than reason's. What the twain,  
Unversant in fate's ultimate laws, reject,  
Grace gratulative enjoins. Not separate life,  
But oned, perfection's source.

*An Oratory. Daybreak.*

## CLARA and ANGELA.

*Clara.* I have erred, not sinned. My soul in faith  
assured,

Feels conscious of acceptance, and of prayer,  
Night long companion of the stars, fulfilled.  
Relief and surety come on day's broad wing.  
My spirit, fountainlike, of the present full,  
O'erflowing with the future, life hath all  
I ever asked. God shriven then, be it mine  
What once I failed in to amend ; to undo  
The wrong and do the right. Thee thank I, Lord !  
For this repose of spirit, this sense of peace  
By thine approof made holy. Hear I not,—  
Fanning the calm of morn with sensible beat,  
The musical movement of an angel's wing,  
Vibrant with spherulic airs ? Nay, on my heart  
I feel the hint of a bodiless hand, as rose  
Wind-ruffled, might some pitying finger feel  
Its leaflets smoothening. Sweetened by seraph's breath,  
And scent of saintly garments seems the air.  
Speak, spirit ! for sure I am, one circleth me  
In narrowing ring, and swiftening folds, as erst  
Rounded the worshipping priest, of primal faith,  
His arrowy rock, sun-sainted. Voice thyself,  
Angel !

*Angela.* The spirit of her, thine earliest friend  
Am I.

*Clara.* Thy best-belovèd, say.

*Angela.*

Best loved. I

Thy trials, tears and sighs have numbered all  
 Since the sad day thou followedst to the tomb  
 The form once dearest to thy sisterly heart.  
 Deem not thyself uncared by me, when first  
 A desolate heart embodied, with pale arms  
 Outstretched to the pitiless world, and stern quatrain  
 Of elements, thou well nigh met'st fate half-way ;  
 Nor think I have never marked thy course through life,  
 Most like a weeping and dishevelled cloud  
 Trailing its forlorn honours o'er the sea  
 Rude, reckless, unsympathetic, till it reach  
 Time's western gates which, passed, ope but one way ;—  
 Nor eyed thee from woe's waves soul-whelming, seize  
 The pearl of spiritual content which yet  
 Thine angel brow shall light, as it hath earned  
 The approving love of saints in heaven who watch  
 O'er two estranged hearts, in whose union earth  
 Her summing good awaits. His spirit who still  
 Loves thee, thou yet shalt bless ; and, ere the end,  
 Thine hallowing, will I guide unto his breast,  
 God guiding me. For he himself foreknown  
 Knoweth, called, chosen, but oh ! not sanctified  
 Not perfected, nor of saints celestial peer  
 While yet one selfish thought otherwards dims  
 The soul presumptuous, or with one wish, not  
 For their good aimed, disturbs. To thee is given  
 The glory of teaching this, to me the grace  
 Of bidding thee so act. When he thou lovest,  
 Urged by thy gracious influence, grafted in him,  
 Lives consonant with his destiny, so conceives  
 Of life's great ends that duties show as soul's  
 Best privileges, obedience stands transformed  
 To triumph, then the end indeed draws nigh.  
 Till penitent of all sin and sanctified,  
 Even spirit elect pleaseth not wholly God :  
 Nor itself gladdens in him with that whole joy  
 The perfected conceive who walk through life  
 Heart-crowned, with the aureole of divinity  
 Their reborn nature glorifying.

*Clara.*

Be this

And all things as God would.

*Angela.*

Ye both have erred.

Missioned for this cause prompt from heaven I come  
 To show ye this. Thou shrankest to share with him  
 His exaltation in the house of life,  
 Miraculous, unconceived lest secular cares  
 Thy way from peace and still humility warp,  
 Mistrusting destiny ;—nor he his heart  
 Would lovewards ope, lest the magnificent end

World-rule, of God determined, in his hands  
 Waver, or wane, or e'er his thoughts quit. **Heaven**  
 Otherwise orders. Thou to him shalt reach,  
 With God's design the fruit of perfectness  
 Pure grace ; calm, holy, generative of peace  
 And vital wisdom ; not on truth's domain  
 Deviating by chance, nor on strict virtue's grounds  
 Trespassing, as by stealth ; but in thy course  
 Upheld by holiest patience, shalt with all  
 Divine conditions congruous live, as earth  
 Moves with the moving future of the stars,  
 Fateful and fair as they : even here, in heaven,  
 Quickened with life eterne, the saved, reborn  
 Of God the Spirit, are spirits themselves divine  
 Whose will the worlds await. Hence, seek thy fate.  
 This union is decreed in heaven—and blessed.

*Clara.* I yield. Albeit aye erring, let me not  
 Urge pardon for defectible nature ;—that  
 Is God's decree, too ; but with purest gold  
 Obedience, haste to o'erlay God's mercy-seat,  
 The hour of life he grants us here.

*Angela.* It is well.  
 This hoped I from the first. Know, in yon orb  
 Where first,—this quit,—I, greatened in soul by death  
 Rejoiced, thy loved one now, mine erst, to meet,  
 And point his spirit hopeful of heaven, to truth ;—  
 Orb, which then lit to rest the sun, but now  
 Him ushereth, as thou seest, this morn to toil  
 Celestial, and the glory of active life,  
 I thy felicitous fate presaged, than mine  
 Happier,—as seemed to eye of being which yet  
 Earth's echoes thrilled ; fate now fulfilled. **Lo, there !**  
 See where yon wanton sun, not yet ripe aged,  
 But, feigning infancy, with Morn's fair hours  
 Sent to arouse him, toys, and bids them bind  
 Their grossest gauzes round him ; lo ! he stirs,  
 And suddenly every golden swathe that ringed  
 His mummied limbs falls off ; his wakeners scud  
 Far, far, rose blushed ; he triumphs innocently ;  
 And smiling gives to eternity the day  
 He had promised ere he slept. Accept, so thou,  
 Life's renovative season, and be content  
 With all good compassable.

*Clara.*

Be it as heaven wills.

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## XXXVI.

Perfection gained,

'True love his life renews, now sanctified.—  
 Our world-seer counts humanity's gains, how earth's  
 Best aims by the associate wise the' elect  
 Of universal manhood leagued to instal  
 God's peace, the peace of earth, show. 'Neath one head  
 One moral empire seems secured, whose laws  
 Tend proveably but to human weal, not power  
 Selfish, nor private ends. What forces now  
 Life's game? It may be fate. The all-tested soul,  
 Whose aim to most serve men proves best to rule,  
 His doomful choice here makes; war, life prolonged  
 To the fore-flood fathers' years, with personal powers  
 Like theirs who,—lords Preadamite, kinged the world,  
 Incarnate forces of the universe,  
 At option, or pure peace, nature's last boon,  
 Death instant, his; he this, for man's good, claims;  
 Unwitting that that hour the day of God  
 Destined, earth's doom-day dawns. Time closes in.

*Garden and Grove by the Sea   Mountains near.*

## FESTUS and OLARA.

*Festus.* Day of all days, bright daughter of the sun,  
 From midnight hailed by rushing star-clouds, glad  
 With their auxiliar light to perfect here  
 My loved one's happy birth-hour; day of days,  
 When first, fair bride, thy life-path crossing mine,  
 This transept of existence traced, God now  
 To himself hath hallowed, our united life;—  
 Day which now gives me thee;—and thou, night's queen,  
 In heavenly lowliness sublime, and meek  
 With the sun's imputed radiance, like a soul  
 Holy in God, aye brightening with the light  
 Reflected from the Invisible; earth, albeit  
 Now with thee waned, while nightly in thy lost light  
 Death's daily gain stands forth, and conquest waste  
 Of eternity over time; earth calls on you,  
 Ye sacred lights, God's ministry in heaven,  
 Each other eyeing, to bewail with her  
 As I, these hours, so sadly, deadly sweet,  
 Stopped in mid flight, which, else, might well be deemed  
 Intransitive, immortal; hours, ah! too soon,  
 For me, to cease, like the olden Paradise  
 Earth's glory, flowery initial of time's tome.  
 Thee, too, invoke I, of all fateful powers  
 The complemental force, true one, thrice tried;  
 This reverence, this my worship is to own  
 Thy truthful steadfastness; and, separate life  
 When each can yield help meet the other, a false

And inconclusive end. How only blessed  
Men's aims when steadied by celestials' hands !

*Clara.* My heart intuitive spake the truth, meseemed  
The severance once thou threatenedst could not prove  
Final. God's equity forbade.

*Festus.* Enough ;  
Our guardian angels greeting soon agreed.

*Clara.* And, bidden of heaven, our destined union fruits  
In ominous bliss.

*Festus.* Most dear, most honoured bride,  
Thou sayest. Hast heart to view earth's death-throes ?  
Mark

Her end, with thine like timed ? For as, while now  
The westering sun, high on yon Alpine height,  
Snow shouldered, like a maid for whiteness praised  
Of neck or brow, blushing, in sweet defeat  
Of admiration, comelier,—his farewell glow  
Incarnadines, an instant,—let the moon  
Orient, shed down her silver shafted rays,  
As though in negligent rivalry to contest  
The palm of perfect beauty, man's rapt eye,  
Meanwhile, by the coalition unconceived  
Of natural lights, droops, awed ; so, on thy head  
Heaven's claims and earth's, mine too, in right of death,  
One moment dreadly mingle.

*Clara.* For all fates  
To be prepared, I seek. Thou hast to me  
The world oped and expounded : its needs, claims  
On God ; its fore-reached purpose in his mind ;  
Its compassed ends and failures. I, too, thee  
May have served ; and the All-blessor's wise intents ;  
By proof of heart obedience, and the gain  
Of following truth rather than leading men.

*Festus.* So kind and providently instructive all  
His counsels. Here, too, past the worth of worlds,  
As though we owned the merits of angels, God  
A season of satisfaction, ere all cease,  
And rest hath given, to note the mighty march  
And grieve its closure mind hath made ; the schemes  
Of social life just perfected, now for aye  
Disharmonized by their imminent end ; its gains  
For toil material, and o'er powers matured  
By happy use, which, sovereign servants, aid  
Man's magistracy o'er nature ; this in strength  
Faith's match, unbasing mountains, bridging seas,  
States binding to serve peace and freedom ; this  
Starring anew the night with pit-born light,  
Secrete from primal matter's nebulous flame ;  
This, third of powers imponderable, which earth  
Bridle in her orbit, gravitative, or this

Attractive ; this our knowledge o'er the gods  
 Swiftening and time's poor possible ; this which guides  
 By mineral instinct, through the deep, tall ships  
 Sail winged ; or this not life, but life-like, heat,  
 Source of inanimate motion and innate,  
 Caught from God's breast ;—all nourishing powers with man  
 Leagued, want and death—earth's evillest ills—to slay ;  
 And now, long time victorious.

*Clara.* So advanced,  
 Completion would the curse not blessing seem  
 Whereto creation tends, were not God's love,  
 Making this world's fulfilment that world's base,  
 Better than all we hope. Earth's end how else  
 Conceive, or justify by law divine  
 Not less than natural which, in things made, makes  
 Perfect, fore-state to fall ? If life him owe  
 For breath, for more, death ; access limitless  
 To ampler being, God's plenitude. So, earth  
 Ended, all holds that's well ; faultless the fair ;  
 Potent the pure ; the great and good, joy-souled,  
 Each other helping, serve the many with love.

*Festus.* Who loves thee, Lord, lives like thee ; is, does,  
 good.

*Clara.* Man surely grows more godlike daily, nearing  
 His final future. Thee sublimed in soul  
 And with life's aims uplift to loftier ends  
 Time's lapse hath found.

*Festus.* Time, too, to good men given  
 By work devout, unselfish, sage, to raise,—  
 As lands by hidden force their beach upheave  
 To levels unforethought,—man's social mass  
 To purer life, more reasonable, more just,  
 More parallel with God's plan. Behold ! the bounds  
 Of every separate science, known, and all  
 In one consummed ; all modes of state-rule made  
 Like operative of good ; all liberties  
 Coincident with authority ; every faith  
 Grounded on heavenly influences, and made  
 Their compensating errors so to adjust  
 As truth's success to ensure. O'er all, peace, most  
 Approximative of earth to heaven, and love  
 Brotherly, thirst for others' good, not blood,  
 Now urging nations, more content me yields  
 Than earth's full orbèd realm, my doom. The world  
 One grand equality now kings. Slave, no more,  
 Nor lord,—their common nature regnant—breathes ;  
 Rich drone, nor beggar clammed. Sin, vice and wrong,  
 Hate, misery, lawlessness, contempt of kind,  
 Self-worship, ignorance, fraud, impiety, all  
 Life's fellest plagues, impurity, of thought

Or word, or deed, fled hellwards, the chief wise  
Revering nature, teach hope: the holy chosen  
Pray, interceding for their fellows, God.  
Earth's great ones plight to amity, states no more  
Ravering for war's dread flesh-feast, seethed in blood  
From lust of soil or pride of power, but yearning  
Solely for liberty self-earned, or secured  
For others, knowledge, mental and bodily health,  
And increment of the good God's function, fill  
Pacific, each their just and natural bounds  
Lakelike. Towards this all times have wrought; and now  
Whoso man's worldlife notes, his qualities metes,  
His faculties; sums the vast designs or boon  
Even now benevolent hearts cherish, and brains  
Restless to enlighten souls, and the flesh free  
From servile toils, needs sordid, that to quests  
More pure, more grand, the world's day may be leased  
Largelier, and aims best worthy life, of heaven  
Anticipative,—wots well no ampler lists,  
No fairer scope could God have given, than earth  
As now, state-chequered, with all patterns graced  
Each excellentest, of faith, rights civil, grades  
Of culture, social, mental; cunning craft,  
Refining art; nor deftlier planned to aid,  
By gradual concentration of good gained,  
The just expansion, just, though slowly achieved,  
Of man's supreme capacities, which, sphered  
Integral, all, we know shall cease. Nor less,  
Author and perfecter of man's wondrous life!  
Mark we herein thy wisdom which brooked not  
Men should grow wise too fast, nor blessed too soon,  
Thy bounty in withholding; of sage restraints  
Lavish; in mere deficiency the grace,  
Most manifest, of perfectible power; that all  
Grounded in good and ill, made sage through choice,  
By pure contrition proved, may seek in thee  
Sole, their divinity, and attain. So fit,  
So perfect, seems his training, both in kind  
And instance, of our race, that while we, here,  
This calm concentrate life, large yet intense,  
Consuming, near our culminant destiny,  
The last necessities of his state o'ercome,  
Man—like an exiled prince, who through all time  
Burns to regain his natal throne—hath proven  
By peril, self-abnegation, sacrifice  
By labour, learning, largesse, earnest rich  
Of kingly intents, the integrity of heart  
By birthright his, that purity, that faith  
In faith, and charity to his kind, the wise  
Know needful to reunion with their God.

For, as of old, truth's substitute, in shows  
Mimetic of the moral sphere, through rocks  
Dragged naked, bounding breathless out of flames;  
Walled in the lone grey death cell midst the moor,  
A death regenerative of spiritual life,—  
Waiting by nodding rock triumphant proof  
Of ghostly call, or innocence; by beasts  
Or men, more brute, with sword and brand and snare  
Driven desperately, till the delusive goal  
Raught, lo! the deep and hidden well, whence risen  
And throughly purified, his holy peers  
Elect, joined, their austere splendid life  
Partaking and companioning; signs but these  
Of the soul's struggles, toils, victories, and its blessed  
Acceptance with the power which, granting life,  
Tests meetly all responsible spirits; thenceforth  
Him delegate of God, behoved to abide  
In ever ripening certitude,—and truth's  
Grave mysteries, here, all lore beside outworth,—  
The advent of the Eternal, and the e'er  
Renewable triumph of truth's light. So, now,  
Self-chosen example of humanity, here,  
The initiate of philosophy, while freed  
From physical contest, perilous feat and fear  
Of elements embattled,—tests once meet  
For times of ignorance,—versed in every art  
That life adorns or consecrates; in law  
Ennobling, science which sustains, in ties  
Social and sympathies; in relations pure  
Alike with kind and kindred; skilled in lore  
Profoundest, man hath heired from ages passed;  
A doer of good deeds; strong to endure  
The stings of slander, torts of strength or fraud;  
Perfect in faith's just ordinances; in all  
The duties of humanity, must, perforce,  
More even than erst, clearly approve himself  
Truth's champion, virtue's friend. But, who aspires  
His nature to consummate, to partake  
Strict and entire communion with the source  
Sublime of soul; resolved, though lone, to tread  
The heavenward path of wisdom,—quits, content,—  
Life's labyrinthine round; earth's charming lures;  
Time's fraudulent vanities; abhorrent, shuns  
Man's meaner passions; paltry pleasures, cares  
Carnal or covetous; wily ambition's schemes,  
Rank ostentation's toys; the solid world  
Held but a shadow, every idol form  
And mode of worship waived, trusts schemes no more  
Of faith widespread, wise seeming once, but, now  
Gone like a molten glacier, that of old,

While yet the youthful sun his waxing beam  
 Shot on our shivering orb ice armoured, aye  
 His burning glance fate-fraught and fascinate,  
 By dale and hill followed, till, o'er the brink  
 Precipitous of the abysmal main, it fell  
 In a dry cataract shimmering on the beach,  
 No more to rise; but, henceforth, spirit sole  
 In spirit adoring, he, the enfranchised heart,  
 Trampling on death, and more, the fear of death,  
 Shall equal angels here: the soothly wise,  
 Separate to righteousness, self-reverent, sworn  
 Earth's peace to endeavour aye in spite's despite;  
 Their nature hallowed by their aims; inspired  
 With God's truth, knowing all things as in God,  
 So from him emanant, and, as proveably  
 Purposed by him, good;—evil ignoring save  
 As cloudlet which the calm briefwhile obscures  
 Of perfect being: one substance, all divine,  
 Eternal, indivisible, vital; these  
 With him, all life, unite, as altar fires  
 Assimilate with the heavens.

*Clara.* Should never man  
 Near, more than now, perfection; and the best,  
 Sinners by nature, if by grace sinless, clothed  
 In righteousness divine, as mount with snows  
 Eternal, while within red rabid fires  
 Smoulder, although perhaps subdued, still joys  
 Are there to some not world-known. Let us boast  
 In secret, of our thrones, like kings disguised,  
 And as, in eastern spousals, bride and lord  
 Crown each the other, kingly obeisance, so,  
 Humiliate with the excess of grace God given,  
 Praise we his merciful pleasure in pardoning sins  
 Of loved ones, greater than their power to offend.

*Festus.* Thy soul let revel in its own innocence  
 Even as in snow the snow-pure ermine.

*Clara.* Heaven  
 Is in our inmost spirit as in the eye  
 Yon imaged infinities.

*Festus.* All plans forespent,  
 Pleas present, purposes of future life,  
 To him surrendered who gives all; the passed  
 Errors abjured; mine heart I have molten in tears  
 As kings their gods erewhile in gold to pay  
 Some covetous conqueror; but to my soul God  
 Content with nought but all, hath all at last  
 Remitted and forgiven. It is faith removes  
 This mountain of our sins, and in the sea,  
 Tearful, of penitence casts. As by art's stress,  
 Granite and steel flow free as oil, so 'neath

God's awful love man's conscience stilly thaws,  
 Whate'er its self-shaped purpose losing: here  
 Withdrawn, self-banished, I the ascendant sign  
 Wait of earth's demolition; knowing still  
 With God one preappointed end yet holds,  
 One high design yet unfulfilled. This, soon,  
 The assembled chosen of nations, of our race  
 Chiefest in worth and wisdom, shall make known  
 Returning from all lands, their vast consent,  
 In sage and solemn secrecy achieved,  
 With doom divine, recorded in the roll  
 Of foreordaining fate, and thine own spell  
 Predictive of pacific power.

*Clara.* Our God  
 Is happily lord of peace and union. Strife  
 Divisive nought agrees with love and heaven.

*Festus.* But unity hath shades, modes manifold.  
 Many are the ways God shows us we may serve  
 Man, and his own good cause. These even the toils  
 And trappings of the fight by virtue waged  
 In man's behoof 'gainst ill; the dust, shouts, sweat  
 Of struggling swarms attract; and these, a spot  
 Contemplative, where memory may recal  
 The simple sweets of early love, the heart's  
 Wild honey, gathered in green glades man's eye  
 Seems even to startle; which, like the wrestler's oil  
 In grappling with the world or ghostly foes,  
 May loosen the adversary's grip.

*Clara.* Need were  
 Our deeds, motives to scan, and their results  
 Carefully, prayerfully; every daily sum  
 Of duty verify by its holy rule  
 In God's celestial key wherein, more fixed,  
 More true than nature's fleet forms, all acts, means  
 And ends contingent, through each factor traced,  
 Thought, feeling, interest, ignorance, circumstance  
 And temperament stand solved; of our moral sense  
 And soul's vitality sole test, prime rules,—  
 That each one's acts and purposes comport  
 With others' good not less than ours.

*Festus.* It is this—  
 Life's universal law, the code divine  
 Graved in all hearts wild, cultured, though unwrit,  
 Justly to live and temperately; in peace  
 And charity with the world; content with fate;  
 To law obedient human and divine,  
 And to the lord of law; to all that breathe  
 Kind; sociable with mankind; honouring all  
 Life's pure relationships; to worship God  
 Sincerely, and to do men good; abet

Virtue, the right, always 'gainst vice, wrong, ill ;  
 Truth aye to speak,—for to speak truth's to talk  
 In God's own tongue, truth middle term 'twixt earth  
 And heaven ! to labour honestly, and rest  
 Holily, cheerfully, for he who made  
 All things, both rest and toil hath hallowed ;—us  
 Ones with the one supreme in will, and rounds  
 With good the common nature of all life ;  
 Which of and in him born, him serves and loves  
 With open trustfulness. Whate'er the end,—  
 On this sure base,—that God's wide equity  
 Commensurable with mercy, and than all law  
 Juster, all tabulated claims o'erriding  
 Bidden or forbidden, and which by principles  
 Precept supplants or modifies,—rest we ; safe  
 That even as he himself immutable  
 In essence, but reflecting outward lives,  
 As ocean clouds, shows towards created soul  
 Reciprocal eternally ;—as we love  
 Loving ; condemning as we err ; to all  
 Revering him, resembling, boon ; so man  
 To deity linked, by life immortal, feels  
 In his inmost being when, heartwrung, he forespeaks  
 Heaven's judgment on iniquitous deed ; when wroth  
 At treachery's triumph ; or, when uttering truth  
 Spiritual, inspired,—all states external lost  
 Like star-dust from a seraph's wing in flight  
 Upwards, conscious identity with God.  
 Such union now earth's best reality ; time's  
 Most chief, most choice delight ; the soul at peace :  
 Life's rolling round, to him submit, the Spirit  
 Divine, of loftier ends once meant for man  
 Reminded, deigns to regulate. As when,  
 In class, the pensive tutor,—his high heart  
 Ambitious as a bow upstretched to outshoot  
 All rival boughs, on vast designs intent  
 Inly of human weal, truth proven, or law  
 Harmonic, 'tween creator and create,—  
 By timid monitor summoned, shuts away,  
 Sighing, his sacred theories, and proceeds  
 To lowlier needs in earnest ; bent to inform  
 His docile pupils how our sphere the sun  
 Spins round, and in what posture, blandly, at once  
 The mimic globe—by puerile guilt awryed  
 From its right incline, restores, minutely just,  
 To ciphers graved on the arc meridian, brazen,  
 Steadfast, all circling ; our true attitude  
 Toward heaven thus shown ;—so God, by prayer invoked  
 Stooping to instruct the sons of men, corrects  
 To his eternal and immoveable law

Soul, from its due position sin-wrenched ;—he,  
 So much less prone to punish than to teach  
 Pleased, pleased to expound and rectify, nor time  
 On passed mischance waste, he himself for us  
 Gives as best lesson ; and our poor fallen orb  
 Bids walk again, head skyward ; man's main end,  
 Whate'er his first deflection, being to make  
 Now, best amends we may ; to know, be, do  
 The most we can, of good ; for that we know  
 And do, we in truth are ; and thus bettered, live ;  
 His joy and ours combined. For, when God first  
 Launched on its infinite course this sphere of man,  
 This mixed humanity,—through good and ill  
 Contestful, whirled—as earth through gloom and sheen—  
 Zoned it with laws, with broad degrees of right  
 Humane swathed, and with binding lengths of love  
 Divine, convergent, crossed, he midst all powers  
 Of fate the intelligible orb enthroned ;  
 Housed it with angels ; him, their common source  
 Beneficent, of light, life, godship round  
 In graduated freedom ranged, and bade  
 To all the bliss thought creatural could conceive,  
 And live, aspire. We, thus encouraged, taught  
 All vital wisdom profitable to man  
 In thought, word, deed and love to him, our being's  
 Fitness and joy most high ; taught here to know  
 The virtues are heaven's elements, as air,  
 Fire, water, earth, the world's ; and that the soul,  
 Simple and inseparable, conformed by their  
 Pure quality to his heavenly substance, lives  
 Thence, trans-essentiate, secretly in God,  
 As a star in day ;—find, too, as by access  
 Of finite to the infinite, nature's end.

*Clara.* How rich in teachings is God's word !

*Festus.*

O soul

Of saintly light, wherever truth be voiced,  
 God's word know, as his law in all that's right.  
 Wherever soul acts righteously, intends  
 Truth's triumph, or man's weal, with mutual joy  
 There creature and Creator meet ; not less  
 On crag or desert sand, than temple floor  
 Of porphyry polished, or tall columned courts  
 With moonwhite marble impaved and night-black slabs.  
 Where heart thou findest pure, holy, unselfish life,  
 Love brotherly, matched and crowned with love of God,  
 Seek there his people, his chosen ; hear there his word  
 With all perfections teeming. Who now lodge  
 The living saving truth, nor famishing soul  
 Gorge on gross shadows, and the unfoodful chaff  
 Of ceremonies artistic,—servile form

Of words, nor tinkled time of worship, need,  
 Nor dome spire-peaked, sky peering. **Life's best part**  
 In voiceless converse and serene commune  
 With heaven's soul-sanctifying spirit, who gives  
 To every age fit inspiration, passed,  
 They in their own hearts hold realm, shrine and God,  
 Him in themselves adoring. The soul's war,  
 Its struggle not yet to admit the Almighty force,  
 Though round it and above; the heart's revolt  
 Ended and pardoned; dread, despair, doubt, quelled,  
 God to his saints reveals himself as peace,  
 Parent of bliss. Such, glorified, have sped  
 From deathful nature and her fettering sins,  
 By divine impulse into life eterne.  
 There, errless, they abide. Nor hold such lot,  
 Though of pontifical function void towards man,  
 Irreverend; for, by none else shareable,  
 Save their victorious spirits who, fined in fires  
 Of trial and of soul conflict, running bright  
 Pure, ductile to God's hand as virgin ore,  
 Original innocence have regained; these sole,  
 To God sealed, true felicity know; whose breasts  
 By rational light illumed; and filled with plans  
 Worthiest of man, angelic purposes,  
 Beam, inly sensible of divinity; thence,  
 Such serious rapture radiating, as felt  
 Once, maketh happy aye. Yes, these are they  
 Who in purity of heart, in humbleness  
 Of spirit, faith-fraught, in holiness of life,  
 In sin condemned, repented of, abjured,  
 In will quiescent as the wave Christ's feet  
 Trode tranquil; who, their being yielding up,  
 To him who asks, as a sigh to one beloved,  
 Are wholly God's. Let whoso hath these signs  
 Congenital with the spirit's birth, rejoice.  
 For him time renovates the sphere; redates  
 Earth from its primal order; trebly bright  
 Shine sun and moon; the sweet stars shape themselves  
 Into all oracular asterisms; the clouds  
 Space-born, like thoughts of mind, mount at his spell  
 Compulsory, to forespeak things coming; air,  
 God's fan, wafts Eden; and the large, live world  
 Throbs palpably beneath his hand; his heart  
 Is as an ark twin cherubs, prayer and praise,  
 Fend with life-sacring wings.

*Clara.*

Less worship, more  
 Virtue, the same in all faiths, and their sum  
 Earth needs; a godly race self given to God,  
 Who of his mind partaking, in his will,  
 By boundless acquiescence, co-operate;

Lovers of natural life and cherishers,  
 Though more of spiritual existence, still ;  
 Pacific ; holding each man sacred guest  
 In common with himself, of one great host ;  
 Yielding to him their nature, he, who all  
 Defect o'erfills, to them, his righteousness ;  
 These in the mirror of God's mind his will  
 Reading, shall satisfy, perfective ; his  
 Whose thoughts are high as mountains, deep as seas ;  
 Who in either hand beginning holds and end  
 Of things ; pours forth creation, or withdraws,  
 Like him of yore whose lordly lay led back  
 The rivers gladdening, reflux, to their source ;  
 Regeneration's sacred cycle ; his  
 Whose eye guides nature ; goalless yet.

*Festus.*

How long ?

Nature is full of God ; but he abounds  
 Immeasurably o'er all. His monarch will  
 All law he hath himself ordained, o'errides.  
 Elsewise, defined and calculable, we  
 Sum up, and him deny. Oh, more than all  
 More infinitely, is he who all hath made !  
 It is not enough that in all mine eye beholds  
 I trace him, in all life that buds, breathes, blooms,  
 I feel him in my heart ; in mine, death-freed,  
 The spirit, I hail, eternal and divine.  
 Even evil tells of God to the pure soul  
 And thoughtful, as divinely endured.

*Clara.*

To know

Prayer radius-like unites the soul with God,  
 All central, all surrounding ; shuts the world  
 Out of the heart ; and sets frail being to face  
 Eternal virtue, rapture gives ; but prayer  
 Preferred, is oft more, prayer fulfilled, means, end.  
 Lo, mine now granted in my joy and thine.  
 Think, too, how patient God, how wise man's friend ;  
 Triumph deferring till, full faith assured,  
 Our ill-timed importunities brooked awhile—  
 The world to its forefated end approach.

*Festus.* Man entered on a higher course, the scheme  
 Of things seems in these later, kindlier days,  
 Nobilitated. No slaughterous tools of war,  
 By false-souled priests ill-blessed, by reckless scribes  
 Lauded, tear men to quivering fragments, now ;  
 Nor sword, death's reaping-hook for human corn ;  
 Nor cannon's syllogism confutes the right  
 In bloodiest controversy. One round belief,  
 One universal and simple faith in God,  
 Stablished o'er earth, from slavish ignorance freed  
 And tyrant superstition, one most just

Perfect and catholic polity, makes mankind  
'Though late, an unity ; shows man purified,  
Man elevated, man peaceful, man made wise ;  
Worthy God's rule ; but rule, by his will, on me  
Devolved. And me, the world's vast littleness  
Mocking no more, I look not for that prize  
Vouchsafed me with vain ambition, nor with pride  
Hail, but a toilful privilege deem to serve  
In duty spiritual my brotherly race ;  
Judge it the righteous fine I pay for wish  
Presumptuous granted. Earth's conclusive hour  
Hath clicked its gentle alarm ; and all too late  
'Twere to recall what, if regretful, I  
Have caused, the doom of earth. I have seen ere now  
A penitent people, prostrate, bid remorse  
Trample their hearts as in a winepress ; seen  
Nations when galled with the insults of years  
And wrongs of generations sacrificed  
To the few's selfish class-pride, at last roused  
Wroth, and their ire incendiary demark  
Through all the land ; here by burned cities ; there  
By beacons palaces, fuming night with scent  
Of cedarn roofs—the tapestried handiwork  
Of queens long since anointed, long embalmed,  
Palling the flaunting flames ; sudden, the bold,  
With sense of wrong irreparable, and dread  
Of retribution, chill ;—for soon revenge  
At conscience' feet confesseth,—and in vain  
Time's slowly purpling fruit would fain await  
Repentant, remediless ; so I, my soul  
To thoughts tumultuous yielding once, too prompt  
To impound the future, would, but can, defer  
No longer, time's last end. The final word,  
Raze earth to its foundations, hath gone forth.  
Hungers the inevitable to be fulfilled,  
As gods of the orient, uncomputed years,  
Yearn for their avatars. This end foreknown,  
The secret thought—as torrent subterrene  
Wrenched by distorting strata from the light,  
Falls inly thundering on earth's heart, my soul  
Fills with unnatural tumult, for man's sake  
Not ours, though blent inextricably. And as,  
While storms rend air, on high reigns spatial calm,  
Where spheres their ancient tracks of light re-rolling,  
Salute in saintly silence, storm and star  
Like just intent accomplishing,—so thy life,  
Pure, peaceful as the path ætherial trode  
By her now regnant in mid heaven, and mine,  
Long time by doubt and passion tempested,  
In common with the world, reach one same end.

*Clara.* When, know we not, nor would I know. But  
all time

Seems now a boon unreckonable ; most fit  
Therefore for godliest spirit to rouse the hearts  
Of thoughtless nations to life's imminent close ;  
And as of old the arch-druid, golden knifed,  
From his altar crag now lonely amid the moor,  
Doled forth to awestruck tribes by brands, God's fire,  
Their willowy bowers or rockhewn nests, in brows  
Of cliffs, scooped like the sand swallow's, to warm,  
Hearths sanctify, and life forefend from bale ;  
Do thou, man's thronèd minister, send round  
Thy flame-winged words warning the world of doom ;  
Blessing with hope of heaven : that all in heart  
May home them and hold holy.

*Festus.* The world's rich  
In warnings ; and advice creeps oft-times round  
To find one, goal and starting-point. Already  
A thousand tongues I have caused to monish men,  
Incredulous, to this day, of things to be ;  
Nor by one hour would I, for selfish ends,  
Time's scheme foreclose. The soul made perfect here,  
By him who in secret works, and openly,  
Patent in nature's every fact while yet  
In operation latent, helps by means  
Thrice sifted, heaven, to sow with both hands brimmed,  
The liberal truth, nor faint ; to scatter hope  
And reap belief ; my guerdon sole, as yet,  
To bask me in thy rare retreats, content !  
Where, stripped of mere conventional values, life  
And time are, by deliberate conscience, priced  
At their just worth, the good that may be wrought  
In them and through them for mankind, by mind  
Actful, not o'er solicitous ; where the mock  
Empire which custom sways, the painted forts  
Unreason mans 'gainst truth, delude no more ;  
Where eyes o'ertaxed with the world's tinsel glare,  
The luminous rottenness of sacred shams ;  
The microscopic grandeurs flattery feigns  
Eye-fawning, her own pettiness to hide ;  
The foil of false repute ; the sickly flash  
Of pale and pasty wit tricked from the crown  
Of ignorance worn by puniest judgling ;—add,  
Where ears, distraught by their gong-beaten lies,  
Who betwixt obscurity and ignominy  
Courtèd, embrace both,—gluttons of contempt ;  
By full-fed pity's after-dinner groans  
O'er lean men's nuncheons ; the paper trumpet's blare  
Blown, till it bursts, of charity ; by the oaths  
Obscene, of gentle doctrine gone stark mad !

And babble of opinion's shallowing stream  
 All down its daily kennels,—may each, in still  
 And wholesome shade, rest;—while even here, to view  
 The eye-brine trickling down to the treacled lips  
 Of adulation fined, greed hoped; to hear  
 The bruit of nations questing after dreams,  
 And dream-names, sworn to capture liberty;  
 Might make one wretchless smile. Have I not seen  
 An ignorant people serve the living God;  
 And self-dubbed sapients, grovelling at the graves  
 Of certain dead rogues, ycleped philosophers,  
 Call their foul faith religion?

*Clara.* Rate not now  
 Neath their just worth faith nor philosophy;  
 The soul's instructor this, that sage moderatress,  
 Apt in one faultless breviary, to imblend  
 All faiths heaven's angels might use here with us,  
 We there with them.

*Festus.* Know I not, here and there,  
 An amiable mild-mannered seer whose vast  
 Inheritance of the skies escheats to dust,  
 By voluntary defeasance, atom-wise,  
 Stake out his lines of being, necessity  
 Reason, the absolute, negative,—what not?  
 Measure himself 'gainst God? Assume to be  
 God? and survey the universe of things  
 With some dissatisfaction as a feat  
 Scarce worthy of him, nor comparable at all  
 To that he meant it should be when—his soul  
 Diffused, meanwhile, in death through space—he next  
 Should wake to conscious deity?

*Clara.* Nay, let be.  
 Such bitterness savours not perfection. Sneer  
 Nor sarcasm peace befit, nor spirit affied  
 To charity's friend, content.

*Festus.* Thee firm I know  
 On mercy's side, by kindest nature bound  
 The punitive ire stern justice vaunts to assuage,  
 Though lashing but with tongued scourge, and scorn  
 Of foes presumptuous, even if weak. As when  
 Heaven's lesser bale, through many a stellar house  
 In militant triumph riding, till by law  
 Gods even must vail to, stalled, his fiery team  
 Reins stationary, and, chafed at forced recoil,  
 One bloodshot feverous glance on the luckless lands  
 Thrall'd to the sign he fires, thrown, backening turns;  
 Stamps in the nations fury and civil strife  
 Disastrous; causing the social elements  
 Clash; or, through ruinous insurrection, seek  
 Self sundering, raw contracts, less just; if now,

Beauty's mild orb, that fair benignant, beam  
Conjunctively disposed, on the dread scene  
Time groans withal, her stern swain's human realm  
Compassionating, his brow, frown writhen, she smooths  
While yet far, with boon-asking eye ; and now,  
Neared timidly the starry pest her charms  
Dazzle, toys guileful with the death-strung nerve  
Of his bow sky-arched ; his angriest bolts steel-beaked  
Lulls womanishly ; with strange delicious touch  
Sleeking their storm-packed plumes ; each battailous fate  
To stress competitive softens, to wordy wars,  
Or emulous bent ; thus tempering every plague  
She fails to avert, or, midst her piteous breasts,  
Paler than moonlit lilies, hides ;—the world  
Breathes bold, nor wots the secret treaty of light  
Sealed in heaven's chancellerie ;—so thou, sweet bride  
Predominating by mere humanity, sweep'st  
All bitterness from my heart.

*Clara.* Such grace, mayhap  
Thou deemest weakness still; and much misdoubts  
My mind the emprise thou vowest me to.

*Festus.* Be brave !  
Thy weakness brings forth strength, as the young slight  
moon

The year's main tides. Nor I have strength, nor thou  
Aught to endure or do but comes from him,  
Tasker and lesson. Joy be it meanwhile, to me  
Whose loftiest hope is lowliest even to stand  
'Mong devotees of good ; a vital voice  
With the great whole in unison ; to feel  
How, raised by God's good mercy above the clash  
Of narrow creedlets, jarring systems, sects  
Sick of unnatural piety, overlaid  
With truths so twisted as show well nigh false ;  
One soul from faiths complex and frivolous freed,  
Grace-moved, more worthily truth to construe, may,  
Through simplest trust in God and neighbour man,  
Learning a wiser, teach a happier way.  
Rather than all these spurious sanctities,  
Give me the loneliest desert where man's free soul  
Towers naked in God's eye, and, as a temple  
Empty, but full of awe, let me all shrines  
By art debased, for heaven's uncolumnd fane,  
And truth's unritualled service, quit ; a faith  
Faith fills with visits of angel deities ;  
A pastoral rite, a patriarchal creed ;  
A filial worship of the all-fatherly God ;  
A covenant binding with the Eternal,—this  
Of truth communicative ; this bold to embrace

The vital Infinite. The soul which wins  
 Rest in the alone divine, once purified  
 From all ills gotten of contact with the world,  
 Its hollow shows and rank impostures, dread  
 Of wrongs impossible to impute to God,  
 Yet sure his justice, as all his attributes—  
 Will boundlessly affect intelligent life,  
 Lives rebegotten, a personal verity,  
 By him in view of his complete design  
 The whole, conceived; and so thereto akin,  
 And unto God, name greater than all writ,  
 All wit, can teach, that he who made, and told  
 The broad affinity, seals and sanctifies.

*Clara.* Shows there no peril lest ghostly pride should  
 snare

Our spirits somehow in parleying, pondering, even  
 These ends, so vast, of God? To touch on, seems  
 So oft, in view defective, to comprise.  
 God grant us humble hearts and lowly thoughts.

*Festus.* Love I not, too, humility, these thy plains  
 Of soul, rich in the roots of fruitful things?  
 None but the great in mind, the true in heart,  
 The just in life, the perfect, seek thy peace,  
 Thy pastures, where the consoling spirit oft  
 Walks beatific; sanctifies the breast  
 Which suffers sovereignly, and, all kind, confirms  
 The soul that lists not other's gifts, nor need,  
 Each to himself sufficing; but its own,  
 Loyal, asserts to vindicate God's rights,  
 And, boasting nought its own, all claims as God's.  
 God is my friend, and nature. Sun and sea  
 Are my next neighbours. Yon great main and I  
 In turn expatiate o'er the same sands; wake  
 By each other's bed; or by the sad moon trined,  
 Her silvery kiss of pure and equal love  
 Receive; joint boon and bond. Oft in his sleep,  
 And in this neap of time, I overhear  
 The ubiquitous winds weird secrets interchange  
 With the elements of the future; he alone,  
 To those exalted mysteries unbid; oft  
 From morn's slow opening eye to eve's, sun-drooped,  
 Track his broad dial's hands of ebb and flood;  
 Now, like a favourite thought, recurrent, dart  
 Into his bosom; now, like falcon poised,  
 Mantling his wings, strained stirless in mid air,  
 Float, with the sea-sway swaying; upon his heart's  
 Large and deliberate beat, rocked. Earth, for me,  
 Sometimes, I dream, forgetful of fate's plan,  
 A niche hides, ivy fingered, dank with dew,

Close by her side, where, when the gay day ends,  
 Her world-worn brood she lulls ; with sweets alone  
 Of sleep unsurfeited. The moss-branched woods,  
 Traversed by sloping lanes of evening light,  
 Greet, whispering to themselves, my wonted foot ;  
 And you, gaunt hills, that stand with broad brows bared  
 As in perpetual consciousness of God  
 With us, and inward audience of the heavens ;  
 And pass me along nightly with solemn touch ;  
 In the austere comity of mountains me  
 Accept, your reverent comrade, like endowed  
 With reticent virtue ; ye, who but seem to lack  
 Organic utterance ; quick with sacred thought ;  
 And through the eye's still commune not unskilled  
 To impart, prompted by dumb immensity,  
 Majestic meditations. Among your forms  
 Unmoved, the spirit consentient with that power  
 Working miraculous in all round, grows apt  
 And proper to the Eternal. We believe  
 In silence, looking on the face of things  
 Which have returned through changeless years his gaze  
 Who in time's fluctuating effects,—absorbed  
 Mid their surroundings, iceberglike,—joys not ;  
 But in his own pure mountainous purposes,  
 Fixed as the ever sedent fates, the orb  
 Which dominate. Drawn thus, and in right accord  
 Towards the divine, we walk, like paced with God,  
 Leaning on him, and, conscious of the vast  
 Circumference of his arm, advance ; no more  
 Maker with made, nor just law with blind force  
 Or act of chance misblending ; but sustained  
 By his impartible strength, and by the smile  
 Cheered, which all spirit turned Godward doth illumine,  
 We tread down each day's shadow, and so step  
 Clean o'er the soiling world.

*Clara.* The world nathless  
 We too much love, for those imperial tasks  
 And kinglier ends the soul is destined to,  
 By him who calls us not to trifle but reign.

*Festus.* It is manworld only, this petty universe  
 Deformed by sin and self hood, to the sense  
 Breeds vileness, and repugnance of pure thought.  
 God's outer sphere is faultless. Be it man's  
 To accord the soul-world with the world-soul, God.  
 When from each heart youth's grand illusions perish,  
 Mean wits deem so much wisdom earned ; conceits  
 Exploded counting virtual truths, not knowing  
 The multitude here of sectional sciences  
 Accomplished ignorance. Truth can be but one ;

Of all, the essence sole and simple.

*Clara.*

See!

The blue of heaven o'ercast. Each natural change  
Seem I to dread, sad forenote of the end.

A rising gust o'erawes me. Vain alarms  
Doubtless, but erewhile to be verified.

*Festus.* Life's shadow, death, hastes to enshroud the  
world.

*Clara.* You skiey mourners that, like mine own sad  
thoughts,

Can scarce yourselves sustain, too prompt to tears,  
Let me at least weep with ye. Nature, here  
Ends her divine descent. Henceforth it is God  
Claims all things, and reclaims. And can it be,  
That all this vast and visible scheme of things,  
Set in light's golden frame, no more shall eye  
View? Mountain; streamlet swiftening to the deep;  
Sword, flower besprent; wind-haunted forest; plain  
Fruit-laden; all gone? Shall nevermore that peak  
With stern uplifted finger threatful, check  
The outgoing storm, and bring it to his feet,  
Effusive? Nor yon grim glacier where it creeps  
Wrinkled and rigid, as snake half frozen, e'er burst,  
At streamy touch of the all-transfiguring sun,  
Its icy enchantment, nor its patient hope  
Yet gain, of all its race this only, balked?  
Shall no to-morrow be? Shall the fair moon,  
Her starry stations nightly accomplishing,  
Threading in wavy orbit every sign,  
Wax ne'er again; like us, safe housed within  
The mansions of the immutable?

*Festus.*

All souls,

One grand, one worldwide trial passed, shall glide  
Into eternity as the awakening earth  
Rounds towards the day re-risen. Our Lord, even now,  
With knowledge fills of passed things and to come  
The spirit by him forechosen; and as in cave  
Caucasian, priest hereditary, tribe-led  
At old year's end, thrice pacing the emerald walls  
Those mystic offerings, none but he may, makes;  
From off the central altar, rock-squared, lifts  
The chalice golden chased, with drowsiest juice  
Of bearded grain creaming, and from its hue,  
Clear or beclouded; troublous or stirless state;  
And savour sweet or acrid, to those round  
Of time's forth-issuing seasons much divines,  
Peace, life and plenty, dearth or death or war;—  
So me hath God installed from time's full cup  
At eve of earth's great year, to announce to man

Grief gone, pain passed, the day of general joy  
And,—war, the world's worst curse rehomed in hell,—  
The age of peace perennial.

*Clara.* Earth, as though  
In forefeast of delight, and dimly limned  
Grandeurs to come, looks wistful of a change  
Brightening, dawnlike, man's mind, new-moralled.

*Festus.* Dream  
Of perfectness too soon alas ! to cease.  
But better thus than as of old, when earth  
Despairing lay, war-gored, by ignorance base  
Blinded, and crushed by weight of despot crowns,  
Piled on her panting bosom. Await thine hour,  
Hopefully, earth. Peace, victress peace draws nigh.  
The secret longings of the wise, deep based  
On perfectness, fast ripening, leave joy's heart  
Beggared of blessings not all heavenly. And now  
Thrill with the audible advent of their fate,  
Fate predetermined good, all lands ; his boon  
Last, loftiest, best, who all founds.

*Clara.* Ere the worlds,  
Light was : ere light night ever-being, pierced  
After by sun-stars ; and world, light, and night  
Spring up and cease, while God's word but matures.

*Festus.* Grinding the road of doom on worldlike  
wheels,  
Time's coming coursers, day and night, I hear  
Whirling the car of destiny. It comes.  
The clouded dust of ages marks its track ;  
Now, lost in depths of space ; a moment, mobbed  
By noisy nations ; now again, it hurls  
All hindrance from its path. The gates of force,  
The bars of hate and prejudice, in vain  
Oppose. It thunders to my feet. Time's lord,  
The sun, long sunk, that sober legacy  
Of light he left the hour spent, too, night warns us  
Hence.

*Clara.* And I feel, with all these failing flowers,  
Consentful. Nature hath to all things given  
Her silent signal. Earth her thought-racked brow,  
Racked to provide for all she is doomed to bear,  
Pillows at God's feet ; and to his diligent guard,  
Her slumbering spirit commends.

*Festus.* We ours to him,  
Like confident, as not cherished less, less watched,  
At day's dawn, sun crowned noon, or eve. Me leaving  
Somewhile, go, sacred consort of my soul ;  
This coring deepliest in thine heart ; that they  
Who love, know God, to his their wills conform  
As mists to mountains, and, like one long trained

In loyal suit to nature, who forehears  
 In clouds the ripple of rills, as yet ærial  
 Which shall make glad the meads ; who views in stars  
 The adoring awe their light shall sometime win  
 In eyes of unborn ages ; so souls foregraced  
 By like gifts to conceive all scope of good  
 Heaven prophesies fulfilled, not only God  
 Indwell, but here participant of the joy  
 He in them feels, shall, dying, ever live !

*Clara.* May we so live we dread not here to die.  
 So die, we dread not afterward to live !

*Festus.* Now heaven be thanked, man's end henceforth  
 can man

Calmly construe, note hopefully ; and, seen,  
 Exist, at least, not miserably ; our God,  
 By dread experience, known, of Hadëan realms,  
 No more, as falseliest once to impious thought,  
 Unjustest of all beings ; indeed most just.  
 Yes, now I can behold the world nor breathe  
 The life-long sigh that I or any live ;  
 That souls whose sins minute hell's fiery light  
 Taxed to make legible even in God's broad eye,  
 Should, cursing and accursed, their Maker's shame,  
 Live, deathless, inameliorable. Thank God !  
 God's realm hath no such scandal ; boundless space  
 Hides no such horrible blot on nature's end ;  
 A figment, which, if true, God were not God,  
 Man, man, nor fiend their enemy. As one  
 Who at ebb of tide, by treacherous underdraught  
 Sucked seawards, stealthily, tossed here, tossed there,  
 In death-play of the brutal surge, ere yet,  
 At turn, hurled landwards scornfully, wave on wave,  
 Each strenuously intending doom,—the foam,  
 Wide-spreading as his watery winding-sheet,  
 Eyes round him ; and beyond, the infinite  
 Upper and lower, sees, of main and sky,  
 All pitilessly conclusive of his end ;  
 And knows the elements oathed against him ; knows  
 Nought with him, God except, and hope ; at last,  
 Battling no more with breakers, even for breath,  
 Feels, as his feet insensitive drop, the sand,—  
 Friend unsuspect, unconscious, unbeheld,—  
 And with his heart's last life-beat, lifts again  
 His head from burying billows,—lifts, and lives ;  
 As one who toiling up the burning slope,  
 High pitched, of cone volcanic, soon to outpour,  
 Dread prelibation of earth's end, red floods  
 Fuellous, of lava, in God's cup of wrath  
 Slow brimming, till the ebullient dross, league-high,  
 Shoots up, hell spilling ;—scorched by sun-fires ; parched

By fumes sulphureous from above, by heat  
 Subterrene stifled ; now, by stony showers,  
 Gleet-hot, imperilled, now by hissing streams  
 Of seething ore,—swoons, falls : but, once restored,  
 And, wistfulness returned, the healing ice  
 Loosed from his feverous forehead, as from crag  
 In spring, fall winter's snows,—conceives, towards God,  
 The rebegetter of his future, thanks  
 Such, and so vast, as might a nation feel,  
 From famine saved, or pest ; so I, from sense  
 Of hell, mistaught by merciless ages passed,  
 Reproachful against God, the infinite love,  
 As scourging soul with self-perpetuate woe,  
 Firefloods eruptive of wrath endless, freed ;  
 And knowing all things spiritual bettering aye,  
 Perfecting, growing worthier of God's thought,  
 Ever, by even disciplinary pains,  
 Can look now on the world if not with joy,  
 With trust of ultimate peace ; so much hath search  
 Of truth, faith lowly but firm, and meditative  
 Perfection, profited me, as this to know ;  
 That not till freed from soul-seductive cares  
 The longing for mere knowledge, greed of power,  
 Luxury, the world, and all its nothings, lures  
 To lead astray, I have lived to spurn or shun,  
 Can soul, by such disoriented, recur  
 To union with the Onemost spirit ; nor e'er  
 Till all men's broken faiths remassed in one,  
 God's unity end, and man's vast brotherhood  
 Spread peaceful o'er the earth shall all partake  
 Faith's universal headship ; war thenceforth,  
 Sacred or sæcular, ceased for aye. For know,  
 While leonine tribes, which, desert-shrined, deem God  
 One sole : and while the art-loving races seized  
 With sense of deity through all things diffused,  
 And conscious of more complicated life,  
 Trace him, through nature's myriad-sided whole,  
 Trine-wise, or manifold, simple faith at last  
 Names the All-one ; shows earth's all various creeds,  
 True in time's partial views each, in the eterne  
 One verity, same and whole. This truth to me  
 Blessed, who have visited all earth's holiest shrines,  
 And by alien ritual undeterred, have joined  
 My spirit in worship at all sacred feasts  
 Saying, God be hallowed here as allwhere, only ;  
 Soul of the world ! Source of all good, and end,  
     Teach us true worshippers to be,  
     Spirit in spirit, Lord ! of thee ;  
 Our soul's just judge, lover and lord of truth.  
 Men's piety reverencing in all earth's creeds,

In every sanctuary, his praise with prayer,  
 Parents of peace, I have found. To all who him  
 Love truly, and spiritually adore, he grants  
 Like favour, like delight. Nor needs for this,  
 So perfect commune, one revealing word  
 Soulwards, the spirit of God divinely dumb.  
 But as when, long winter passed, his fibrous veins  
 Stiff and contract with stormy cold, some oak,  
 Hallowed by patriot legend, and with birth  
 Of world-feared realm coëval, feels, one morn,  
 His tender leaflets buddening in the breeze,  
 And loosening in the light; hears himself breathe,  
 With self-felicitant murmur; waves his boughs  
 Towards every casual wing in welcome; laughs  
 To know himself alive; his gay, old heart,  
 Tingling 'neath spring's regenerative touch,  
 Swells with the sense already of worshipping praise  
 He through his shade shall reap from beasts and men,  
 Stretched grateful, at his huge roots, there to enjoy  
 Life's natural sacrament of rest; while round  
 His leafy tent prowl summer heats, in vain  
 Ravening; so, I, faith's festive light refound,  
 Live fourfold, and in this my soul, beyond  
 All world-force, feeling the' elements of heaven  
 Struggle for loftier and more perfect life,  
 Like-natured with the infinite, joy with joy  
 Speechless, as earth, when she God's smile returns.

*Clara.* But even if all mysterious rites thou hast  
 learned,  
 The spirit's probation, and just progress; still,  
 Till pride of knowledge in the humility ends  
 Of wisdom; and all proud desires of power  
 In righteous service manwards, and to God,  
 Thou hast learned nought, and lived in vain.

*Festus.* I am one  
 Contented with his call, who knows the world  
 Progresses just as heretofore, by wrongs  
 Much, and by rights a little; who, possessed  
 By absolute indifference to the run  
 Of fortune's and the world's blind turmoil, waits  
 His destined task, as mariner late storm-tossed,  
 By his beached boat stretched, swarthening in the sun,  
 Lists the quick creeping flood. I seem to have passed  
 All world-life, all desire. My blood fulfils  
 Its orbit as the stars their round in heaven  
 With a cool constancy even I admire.  
 What would my monitress? For the soul to have passed  
 Passion and doubt, twin helps, twin foes, and trust  
 Illimitably in God, who builds his heaven.

On love, the life-link between himself and man ;  
 And our immortal know the interior arc  
 Of his more vast eternal, seems true life,  
 Nor all unworthy of high intelligence ;—  
 Which life attained the aspiring spirit shall find  
 Unselfish virtue's meed ; the rational joy  
 And satisfaction just, to us accruing,  
 Of spiritual holiness which to us outsprings  
 Direct and radius-like from God's own heart,  
 Eternal therefore ; and the gracious boon  
 Of infinite amendment fixed by God  
 On all free spirit though peccant, surely at last  
 Amenable, as imperfect, narrow, dark,  
 To suasions of the infinite perfect light ;  
 Thence penitent and progressive ; yes, to know  
 Him, the' universal being, in time deployed  
 Through forms innumerable, the all lifeful stars,  
 Globules that float through his galactic veins,  
 And yon spherebounding sea, the shimmering fringe  
 Of his broad skirts world-spangled, spread o'er space ;  
 One self-evolving essence which all things  
 O'errules and underlies ; the source eterne  
 Of all conceptive nature ; to mere life  
 Life elemental, with the permanent flow  
 Of streams, and virtual immortality  
 Of mountains ; to earth's annual growth the sense  
 Adding of animate instinct ; but in man  
 Self-knowledge of the whole, its parts, plan, end,  
 Its author, and his own, whose advent here  
 Flesh hallows ; in whose consciousness of sin,  
 And the ill, the imperfect, the inadequate  
 Attempts we make to realize truth and good,  
 Our finite thwarts the Infinite ; and makes  
 The natural cross both suffer ; but whose death,  
 When soul that's bound on earth is loosed in heaven,  
 Shows us the reascendant god, is life  
 Eternal, life celestial, life divine.

*Clara.* May such be ours !

*Festus.* Oh, may it ! To me thy life  
 Redeems a long sad passed, and fills with sense  
 Of joy unutterable the brief to come.  
 As a fountain which from Andean heights art-led  
 Into palatial gardens, massed with flowers,  
 Though far beguiled and long repressed, jets up  
 At last columnar, seeming so to express  
 Its own and nature's innocent glee ; nor can,  
 Though of all rills simplest, secretest, conceal  
 Pre-eminency of source, but, 'gainst its will,  
 Itself encrowns with soft and scintillant snows

Of night-starred silence vindicative, and coy,  
 And colourless perfection of pure life,  
 Such as earth owns, heaven neighbouring ; thus too, thou  
 To me, sweet, come, reanimatest the world  
 Howbeit not of thine element, and the soul  
 With recollection of celestial things  
 Serenest, only impartible from on high.

## XXXVII.

Not on one plane indeviabie, the soul  
 Makes way, but moonlike waveringly as though  
 Not to advance for a time content ; the while  
 Urged by interior fate to compass heaven  
 Pauseless ; the spirit's instruction still proceeds ;  
 And God's original end itself fulfil.  
 Soul commune solitary with God ; faith, prayer  
 Strengthen the spirit meekly sustained by sense  
 Of travail, for the world's weal fate to endure  
 And rule. God, through his angel, tidings blessed  
 To man sends of acceptance sealed ; his choice  
 Pacific ratified. Yet welcome though,  
 The heaven imputed charge, now imminent, weights  
 The aspiring soul with prescient grief, if heaven's  
 Free testimony make glad, and man's assent  
 General, but unproclaimed to power God-vouched  
 With calm fill now inalienable for aye.

*A lonely Lodge among the Snowy Mountains.*

FESTUS alone ; afterwards GUARDIAN ANGEL.

*Festus.* I feel as if I could devour the days  
 Till the time came when I shall gain mine end ;  
 God shall have made me ruler, and all worlds  
 Signed the sublime recognizance. Till then,  
 Even as a boat lies rocking on the beach,  
 Waiting the one white wave to float it free,  
 Wait I the great event ;—too great it seems.  
 Yet, Lord ! thou knowest the power I seek for sought  
 For man's good and thy glory, and its desire  
 By thee inspired. As I use it use thou me.  
 Thou hast said that such I shall enjoy, and then,  
 My mission and thine ends accomplished, here,  
 I seek a world where souls begin again,  
 Or life take up from where death broke it at.  
 Like disproportion there 'tween will and power  
 As here, may not be. If not, I shall be happy.  
 I feel no bounds. I cannot think but thought

On thought springs up, illimitably, around,  
As a great forest sows itself; but here  
There is nor ground nor light enough to live.  
Sealike, I would be everywhere at once;  
And, sensible of the natural competence  
To outspread my spirit o'er all the endless world,  
Would act at all points. Bound to one, I feel,  
So poor mere place is, with ubiquity weighed,  
As well nigh nowhere. Sense, flesh, feeling, fail  
Before the imperious mind's feet as the dust  
She treads, windlike lifts up and leaves behind.  
How mind will act with body glorified  
And spiritualized, and senses fined,  
And pointed brilliantwise, we know not. Here,  
Even, it may be wrong in us to deem  
The senses degradations, otherwise  
Than as fine steps, whereby the queenly soul  
Comes down from her bright throne to view the mass  
She hath dominion over, and the things  
Of her inheritance; and reascends,  
With an indignant fiery purity,  
Not to be touched, her seat. The visible world,  
Whereby God maketh nature known to us,  
Is not derogatory unto himself,  
As the pure Spirit Infinite. A world  
Is but, perhaps, a sense of God's whereby  
He may explain his nature, and receive  
Fit pleasure. But the hour is hard at hand,  
When time's gray wing shall winnow all away,  
Heavens, stars, earth's atoms: when Creator mind  
And mind create shall know each other; worlds,  
Bodies put off, and man his Maker meet  
Where all, who through the universe do well,  
Embrace their hearts' desire; what things they will  
And whom remember; live, too, where they list;  
And with the beings they love best, and God,  
Inherit and inhabit boundless bliss.  
Hear me, all-favouring God! my latest prayer;  
Thou unto whom all nations of the world  
Lift up their hearts, like grass-blades to the sun;  
Who all things hast, save need of aught; who hast given me  
Earth and her all; give from thy garner stored  
With good, some sign Lord now in proof to earth  
My prayers are with thee; that they rend the clouds,  
And, rising through the sightless dark of space,  
Reach to thy central throne. Oh! let me feel,  
What was my constant dream in my young years,  
And is in all my better moments now,—  
My hope, my faith, my nature's sum and end,  
Oneness with thee and heaven. Lord! make me sure

My soul already is in unison  
 With the triumphant. Ah! I surely hear  
 The voices of the spirits of the saints,  
 And witnesses to the redeeming truth;  
 Not, as of old, in scanty scattered strains,  
 Breathed from the caves of earth and cells of cities,—  
 Nor as the voice of martyr choked with fire,—  
 But in one solemn hymn of joy as when  
 From the bright walls of the heavenly city they  
 Looked on the war of hell, host upon host,  
 Foiled by God's single sword before their gates  
 Of perfect pearl;—nearer and nearer now!  
 This is the sign, O God! which thou hast given,  
 And I will praise thee through eternity.

*Saints from Heaven.*

Call all who love thee, Lord! to thee,  
 Thou knowest how they long  
 To leave these broken lays, and aid  
 In heaven's unceasing song;  
 How they long, Lord! to go to thee,  
 And hail thee with their eyes,—  
 Thee in thy blessedness, and all  
 The nations of the skies;

All who have loved thee and done well,  
 Of every age, creed, clime;  
 The host of saved ones from the ends  
 And all the worlds of time:  
 The wise in matter and in mind,  
 The soldier, sage, and priest,  
 King, prophet, hero, saint, and bard,  
 The greatest soul and least;

The old and young and very babe,  
 The maiden and the youth,  
 All re-born angels of one age—  
 The age of heaven and truth;  
 The rich, the poor, the good, the bad,  
 Redeemed alike from sin;  
 Lord! close the book of time, and let  
 Eternity begin.

*Festus.* Will ye away, ye blessed? To God I then  
 Commend ye, and my soul with yours; and midst  
 The light ye live, in, oh! mind ye of the days  
 Sunless, and starless nights, myriads on earth  
 Pass without faith's one ray, and pray for those  
 Who in the world's dark womb bound, know not yet,  
 Through indifference, ignorance, or disbelief,  
 Their sire, God. Lord of all earth, all worlds, all heavens,  
 Lift up to thine my spirit; let me so share  
 The comfort of thy love, that while ordained  
 To my great task, no more misgivings, fears,  
 Nor mortal doubts, the soul chill, thou by thy love  
 Hast hallowed, and so made like molten gold

The mould that holds it precious ; or for thine  
Own ends, if such thou suffer, may they pass  
Quickly and traceless, perish ; all thoughts of earth  
All deathpangs too o'ercome, may I with thy chosen,  
Seraphs and saints, and all-possessing souls,  
Which minister through the universe, to thee,  
Enthroned in spirit's intensest bliss, succeed  
To heaven for ever.

*Guardian Angel.*

Hear, mortal, and believe.

The soul once saved shall never cease from bliss.  
She doth not sin. The deeds which look like sin,  
The flesh and the false world, are all to her  
Hallowed and glorified. The world is changed.  
She hath a resurrection unto God,  
While in the flesh, before the final one,  
And is with God. Her state shall never fail.  
Even the molten granite which hath split  
Mountains, and lieth now like curdled blood  
In marble veins, shall flow again when comes  
The heat which is to end all ; when the air  
Is as a ravening fire, and what at first  
Produced, at last consumeth ; but the soul  
Redeemed is dear to God as his own throne,  
And shall no sooner perish. Harken, man !  
Will thou distrust God ?

*Festus.*

God I ne'er distrust.

*Guardian Angel.* Perchance his dooms perplex thee ;  
thou wouldst know

Why this, why that, were ta'en. If that, by charm  
Of world-lore and all mysteries abstruse,  
Art's secular sanctities and accomplishments,  
Would have divert thy heart, thy life absorbed  
As fain she would, to her own ends : if this,  
Of sway ambitious, had foreurged the arm  
Of empire, ere among men's minds the need  
And good of universal peace became  
Compeer, in thine, of conscience purified  
And life sublimed and hallowed ; had life's friend,  
Though cordial and sincere, infected thine  
With his soul's selfish purports, love of power,  
Wealth, knowledge, state and rule for any good  
Narrower than all thy kind's ; the stars had stopped  
Their sacred march. All fates are in God's hand ;  
And whether by their own presumption, pride,  
Passion or ignorance, this or that one cease,  
Perish, man knows not, angel knows not. All  
Know it is just. Doubt thou on doubt no more.  
Prepare then for the power and lot most high  
Whereto the Lord hath called thee. He hath heard  
The prayers thou hast now besought him with, heart-  
strained,

And bids me tell thee, shrink not, doubt not. He  
Will comfort and uphold thee at the end.

*Festus.* Thou art mine angel guard! I recognize,  
In every holy feature of thy face,  
The instigated thoughts of heaven which oft  
In my world wanderings blessed me; in thy touch,  
The virtuous resolution; in thy voice,  
The warning and foreknowledge unexplained,  
Not unesteemed, prompting to do or shun;  
And in thy smile joy total and supreme.

*Guardian Angel.* But death's eternal secret all must  
hear.

*Festus.* I fear, I fear this miracle of death  
Is something terrible.

*Guardian Angel.* Where faith were not  
In God's all-moulding hand, such fear were well.  
As when aerial voyager—in car  
Strung pensile 'neath some huge and gaseous globe,  
That but by loftier levity attains  
Life's limit, upwards eyes the Infinite,  
Formless and vast as deity; then, while through  
His mind, himself a wind-steered atom—pass  
Inexplicable thoughts and doubts sublime,  
And troublous forecast of his travel's end,  
Pores, wistful, downwards on the sea of clouds,  
Peaked far below his feet in billowy hills,  
Sea over sea, whose vaporous baptism he  
Must plunge through, ere he sets where fortune lists,  
Or tyrant gusts decree; so 'twixt all truth  
And death, the uncertain soul, sustained alone  
By its own insubstantive powers, less free  
'Than mutable, sees no safety in its course,  
Nor fixed goal afar. But, soul-assured,  
Rests on the rock-foundations of God's word;  
Nor brooks the awful liberty to doubt.

*Festus.* My soul feels firmer; fitter for the end.  
Too soon, come when it will. But while life lasts  
This holy mystery of incertitude,  
Lawed of God, doubtless, to some good, rules all.  
As when from some broad bluff where rival winds,  
Hold haughty revelry, by night we see  
The lurid lights of a huge city lie  
Below, like an abyss of fallen stars,  
Marked dully from those heavenly ones, and feel  
The storm and stress of transit, though subdued,  
And as with deadened thunder, still the ear,  
More than day's roar and the tempestuous tides  
Of social strife; so, calling back our years,  
We note where youth's bright aspirations soar  
O'er life's dim actions; how, too, as we age,

Life's recollections more than present deeds  
 Or hopes, mind's courts judicial crowd ; while there,  
 Still, by her balance, sits everlasting doubt  
 Poising and pondering all things. But to God,  
 Go angel, and declare that I repent  
 Of all misdeeds ; that but for his own grace  
 I should repent of my whole life ; that on  
 That grace, which now hath sanctified the whole,  
 I trust for all the rest of it, and then  
 For ever ; that I am prepared to act  
 And suffer as he bids, and in all things  
 To do his will rejoicing.

*Guardian Angel.* It is done.

*Festus.* Oh ! I repent me of a thousand sins,  
 In number as the breaths which I have breathed.  
 Am I forgiven ?

*Guardian Angel.* Child of God, thou art.  
 It is God prompts, inspires, and answers prayer ;  
 Not sin, nor yet repentance, which avails :  
 And none can truly worship but who have  
 The earnest of their glory from on high,  
 God's nature in them. It is the love of God  
 The extatic sense of oneness with all things,  
 And special worship towards himself that thrills  
 Through life's self-conscious chord, vibrant in him,  
 Harmonious with the universe, which makes  
 Our sole fit claim to being immortal ; that  
 Wanting nor willing, the world cannot worship.  
 And whether the lip speak, or in inspired  
 Silence, we clasp our hearts as a shut book  
 Of song unsung, the silence and the speech  
 Is each his ; and as coming from and going  
 To him, is worthy of him and his love.  
 Prayer is the spirit speaking truth to truth ;  
 The expiration of the thing inspired.  
 Above the battling rock-storm of this world  
 Lies heaven's great calm, through which as through a bell,  
 Tolleth the tongue of God eternally,  
 Calling to worship. Whoso hears that tongue  
 Worships. The spirit enters with the sound,  
 Preaching the one and universal word,  
 The God word, which is spirit, life, and light ;  
 The written word to one race, the unwrit  
 Revealment to the thousand peopled world.  
 The ear which hears is preattuned in heaven,  
 The eye which sees prevision hath ere birth.  
 But the just future shall to many give,  
 Gifts which the partial present doles to few ;  
 To all the glory of obeying God.

*Festus.* The knowledge of God is the wisdom of man—

This is the end of being, wisdom ; this  
 Of wisdom, action ; and of action, rest ;  
 And of rest, bliss ; that by experience sage  
 Of good and ill, the diametric powers  
 Which thwart the world, the thrice-born might discern,  
 With the undeflected spirit pure from heaven,  
 That he who makes, unbuilding, saves the whole ;  
 In wisdom's holy spirit all renewed.  
 To know this, is to read the runes of old,  
 Wrought in the time-outlasting rock ; to see  
 Unblinded in the heart of light ; to feel  
 Keen through the soul, the same essential strain,  
 Which vivifies the clear and fire-eyed stars,  
 Still harping their serene and silvery spell  
 In the perpetual presence of the skies,  
 And of the world-cored calm, where silence sits  
 In secret light all hidden ; this to know—  
 Brings down the fiery unction from on high,  
 Chrism spiritual of heaven's eternal sun,  
 Which hallows and ordains the regnant soul ;  
 Transmutes the splendid fluid of the frame  
 Into a fountain of divine delight,  
 And renovative nature ;—shows us earth,  
 One with the great galactic line of life  
 Which parts the hemispherical palm of heaven ;  
 This with all spheres of being makes concord  
 As at the first creation, in that peace,  
 Earth's hope, heaven's joy, the choice of the elect,  
 Life's grace, God's blessing. And as time's vesper hymn  
 The starry matins of eternity  
 Precedes, and dawn of being in the new heavens,  
 To know this, is to know we shall depart  
 Into the storm-surrounding calm on high,  
 The sacred cirque, the all-central infinite,  
 Of that self-blessedness wherein abides  
 Our God, all kind, all loving, all beloved ;—  
 To feel life one great ritual, and its laws,  
 Writ in the vital rubric of the blood,  
 Flow in obedience, and flow out command,  
 In sealike circulation ; and be here  
 Accepted as a gift by him who gives  
 An empire as an alms, nor counts it aught,  
 So long as all his creatures joy in him,  
 The great Rejoicer of the universe,  
 Whom all the boundless spheres of being bless.

*Angel.* I go. Thy God is with thee. We shall meet  
 Ere long, no more to part.

*Festus.* Hear, angel-guard !  
 Hie thee to heaven, and say in man's behalf,  
 Perfect as creatural limits will let be,

All aptnesses of heaven and earth complete,  
 All being's best aims accomplished, God's and man's,  
 Truth, union, peace, society's triple crown  
 Secured, 'twere well, ere fall befall, earth cease.  
 I have chosen ; and all the ambitious hopes of life,  
 Proud schemes of power prolonged ; huge length of days ;  
 And all that secret wisdom toiled to achieve  
 One hour shall wreck.

*Guardian Angel.* It is best for all. Farewell !

*Festus.* It is sweet to feel we are encircled here  
 By breath of angels as the stars by heaven ;  
 And the soul's own relations, all divine,  
 As kind as even those of blood ;—and thus,  
 While friends and kin, like Saturn's double rings,  
 Cheer us along our orbit, we may feel  
 We are not lone in life, but that earth's part  
 Of heaven and all things. Left now lonely here,  
 Like a gray gaunt menhir by the all-wasting sea,  
 The solitude impersonate, nature's ebb  
 Surviewing, let me my life o'erlook. I see,  
 Not inconspicuous, hence :—an islet fair  
 Fertile ; with waste spots ; washed by death's wide main,  
 All streams of life emotional gulphing ; skyed  
 By boundless thought ; and, albeit sunned by faith,  
 And heavenly love, sin-clouded ; passion swept  
 As though the nest of storms ; ribbed through by chains  
 Of mountain acts ; immoveable shackles these ;  
 No subtlest sophist can dislink ; no priest  
 Pretentious loose ; no angel bid fall off.  
 Acts are for ever. Thoughts, like dreamclouds, come  
 Unbidden, and go : nay, oft 'neath reason's ray  
 Evaporate, cease, unknown to the heart or God.  
 But deeds die not ; though trodden below the ground  
 They seed for ever. Yet the coming clears ;  
 The chaos of uncertainties, the storm-fires  
 Of thought-search, feeling, I have passed through, henceforth  
 By force of fate foregone, though scarcely now,  
 Shadows to me, of truth, life sure—no more  
 Vex ; nor, dragged captive, groan I, where'er doubt  
 Skims in his fugitive tents, pitched here, pitched there ;  
 But the well-built walls of castled certainty  
 Me, voluntary, detain, faith's guest, faith's friend  
 Undauntable—dreadless of all siege ; nor awed  
 Of the twinned strife, waged ere the birth of things,  
 Of freedom against fate, mere liberty,  
 The inferior marking ; spirit more high, the stress  
 Of virtue's laws, and reason's despotry ;  
 Until through every range is reached the soul  
 In whose great essence fate with freedom ones.  
 Called by his sovereign mandate thus to reign

In earth and death beyond, my spirit, as air  
 No arrow wounds, passive to every hest  
 The All-sire sends forth, abides. Are God's ways now  
 Less marvellous than of old, with men? Lacks one  
 Due witness in his own considerate heart,  
 Of impulse, guidance, warning, sway divine?  
 All things controlling to concerted ends  
 Material or of mind? Through what dim paths,  
 Unconscious seemingly of all approach  
 Truthwards, I have trode; how secret wisdom's ways;  
 And through what mazy discipline at last,  
 In thought's free centre summed and ended, I  
 Soul perfected am come. How things despised  
 Once ignorantly, have since in life's complete,  
 But graduated evolvment, gained just power,  
 True trust and dignity. How the spirit, cleared  
 From every doubt,—the black o'erbelted clouds  
 Of mystery rounding the orb'd world, is now  
 To faith, pure simple life, and conscious joy  
 Of being with deity concentrate, returned.  
 See love and knowledge, superficial tests,  
 Though once deemed satisfying, now proved but means  
 Soul perfective for heavenlier ends. Command,  
 Life's crowning proof I feel, if or towards self,  
 Or man's good bent. And this now nerves me, I  
 Obedient though reluctant, armed for fight,  
 By faithful love, wisdom divine, and meek  
 Philosophy, whose broad and rational fan,  
 All doctrine winnowing, windlike leaves truth sole,  
 The vital seed of science; with such food  
 Celestial, the sense quickening that nought bars  
 Man's conscience from commune divine, and heaven's  
 Own inspiration; she, life's guard and guide,  
 From creeds opposed like verities draws; annuls  
 All rancour; mediatizes the proud points  
 Of old and worldwide worships, and declares,  
 As every faith begins and ends in God,  
 The virtual spirit of all, love; earth-life, rite  
 Initiative to life divine. Man's heart,  
 So bettered in its aims shall yet with all  
 In heaven beat tunably. Pursuits, desires,  
 Affections, passions which once specious made  
 Existence and experience seeming sage,  
 Paled 'fore death's breathless stride shall cease, and leave  
 Rapt union only with the eternal mind  
 And concourse with its ends. For, once approved  
 The illusoriness of things, the barrenness  
 Of knowledge, and occupation; the unworth  
 Life's solid-seeming bubble infilms, the cares,  
 The needs which here disfigure time, the wrongs

Society most in virtue's name enacts,  
 Maugre the prime decrees staunch conscience owns  
 Heaven sown, innate ; man spiritually framed  
 Upon the scale of gods, with broods of stars  
 Coæval, vast in years, perfectible even  
 To the mid point where mixed humanity blends  
 With pure divinity and parental, views,  
 In God's unbounded and immediate being,  
 All secondary existence reunite ;  
 By beauty of purity drawn ; by holiness  
 Of thought and godliest love of love supreme ;  
 All hopes amassed, all ends concentrate there.  
 To know the truth of God, by none without  
 His special love known ; in accord to act  
 With sanctified intelligences that rule,  
 Each, as the finger of God, a world ; to feel  
 Heart and mind one, with all we rule or serve ;  
 Mind, everywhere like-motived, passioned ; ours  
 Toned all to endure, but hopeful of things best,  
 As ultimately and only bound to be ;  
 To know each new conception gained of God's  
 All blessing nature, proof of commune pure  
 With deity, and of his divine embrace ;  
 Makes the round good I have longed for, and by grace  
 God, now, such capabilities perfected, grants.  
 Come then, the end at once. Nay, wherefore not ?  
 Content with recognition just from spirits  
 Of orders highest, selectest round me,—even  
 As when Jove's prosperous star, upclimbing slow  
 Behind some hill-based city, obscured at first  
 By urban exhalations, and confused  
 With earthlier luminaries, draws soon, serene  
 Towards the upper rooms of space, and the bays bridging,  
 And flat wide wastes of wet and weedy sand ;  
 With beamy path, shows plainly planetwise,  
 Through grandeur of patience, and the ascent to heights  
 More and more pure continually, by hosts  
 Fraternal, in bright conclave welcomed, there  
 With them heaven's arch to tread, and the rare blue air  
 Respire, of immortality, let my soul,  
 By fate and faith empowered all eminence here  
 To o'erpass ; misjudgment's fog cleared, and rank mists  
 Of slander : passion's cloud-scud, and all fires  
 Fatuous or vaporous, ignorant praise ill rates  
 As lights perennial, henceforth of this high end  
 Assured, and state celestial, life's last aim  
 And holiest duty, God to obey, fulfil.  
 The world's precipitate opposition changed  
 To tolerant acquiescence, man's whole strength  
 May still need marshalling 'gainst destruction's ranks

Should these contest the world-realm yet, or those  
Their Lord's disposal of time's ultimate gifts  
Defy, and power's supreme arrangements. Hence  
I live but in the future ; earth in me  
Breathes only, and in my choice ; choice, heaven-approved.  
Too long perhaps withdrawn, too glad to escape  
Once the o'ermastering world, my solitude,  
Myself, it is now for me to quit, and life's  
Opposing interests, influences, contemned,  
Work out for all a freer, worthier fate.  
As one on coast half cave, half crag, but caught  
By tempest, savage breast-room finds, and peace,  
In the sudden silence of a rocky rift,  
Nought visible thence but storm of foam-flakes floating  
Before its mouth like wild words, from white lips  
Wrung reckless, desperate tossed ; save roar of sea  
Nought heard, and his own, his hurried breathing ;—awed  
By the sensible stillness round him of all else,  
And vague unreasoning fears lest thunders thrice  
Reverberant smote, should casually unloose  
The natural vault-work o'er his head, and make  
Safer to face, without, the hurricane drift  
Rock shivering, than abide in that grim cell  
Its calm, so deathful possibly ; tides the while  
Mounting, night falling, his now dread retreat  
By lightning searched, he at last from his niche burst forth,  
Braves resolute, all ; so I, long periods passed,  
Of dolorous exile and seclusion, seek  
Through the tempestuous clash of human wills,  
And general hate, save of the good and wise,  
Mightier than others, or themselves deem, earth's,  
Mine own, and man's convergent destinies.

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## XXXVIII.

Union of God with nature man their son  
 Hymns ; and heaven thanking for all earthly good  
 Perfected in humanity, with his bride,  
 Sibylline, he,—as prophet bards of old  
 Their morn and noontide service,—chants, alterne,  
 Earth's evensong, earth's vespers : night at hand.  
 Hope of the wise and good through time, the world  
 Shown bettered, but by virtue's noblest plans  
 Thought out of genius, and through patient aid  
 Of brethren, saintliest lovers of their kind,  
 So patent made, the holy and sage at last  
 For their best aims and worthiest deeds dare hope  
 God's sanction. Still, let nature grieve, as wont :  
 Man, woman, angel, weep earth's coming end ;  
 End that so chosen shall show earth's final race  
 Still parted ; these self-ranged to serve God's will ;  
 These, contrary, their own ends ; fate still, by death  
 Not,—as ill deemed—unalterable. God just,  
 God kind, accepts, all penitence, at all times.

*Garden Terrace, by the Sea ; Cliff and Wood near :  
 Town in distance.*

## FESTUS and OLARA.

*Festus.* O days of heaven and earth, when all things  
 seem

Perfection, issuant from some central soul  
 Whose life all love, all happiness, transfused  
 Through being we share, and in humane degree  
 Enjoy, nay more enhance ; for man's delight  
 In virtue and holy thought redounds to God's.  
 And as heaven's calm immense, intense, the wind  
 Ceaselessly operative pervades, and so  
 Faintly to us, God's mode of being conveys  
 And action spiritual, we too the more  
 By deed of mind we range the world, and rise  
 To thought serene celestial, and devote  
 Our spirits to inmost commune with his works ;  
 In him our source confessed, our base in them ;  
 Knowing the duties, destinies of souls ;  
 Self-charged their wellbeing to promote, and train  
 The immortal up towards deity, so far  
 Do we God's work, and bear the stamp divine  
 Of perfectness, progression. To perceive  
 Our oneness with the universe, and feel  
 The joyous mystery which each special life  
 Binds to the conscious infinite immasked  
 In its own creations, brings the intuitive soul  
 Such fine delight as simple gods of old  
 Pleased cheaply, felt, who budged unseen the streets

coming with soft  
Feels flow the vita  
Which to its will e  
Makes harmony of  
Subjection grateful  
Beauty inevitable ;  
Ill, like some arroga  
Through the wide w  
Predominant o'er all  
Mixed, as corruption  
For better ends, he, l  
Light erst instilled, d  
Forelive first as in ca  
From toilful apprehen  
In spirit sabbatic ; and  
And various nature's s  
Each in their generati  
Somewhat to feel in co  
Human, instinctive, ve  
One vital force through  
Of nature's powers and  
And delicate outgrowth  
Forest or floweret, gives  
To God a thousand way  
His favourable acceptanc  
Mention within our mind  
On wild and heathery tu  
Green sod of meads, or b  
Laurel and lily cluster, h  
With flowery incense mi  
Dreamy and passive to al  
Cloudlet and sun thrill th  
By rivulets elm o'erarched

Whence the rapt eye may crowd into its ball  
A visioned kingdom; forth to steal at eve,  
Grave tryst to keep with tutelar stars, and trace  
Their prosperous walk through night; or mark them rise,  
Till, with their fair reflection midst the lake,  
They meet in tremulous joy; cave-hidden to watch  
The moonlit cataract, sheeted like a ghost,  
Muttering in awful monotone its one  
Intelligible word of life; to list  
Far off, the torrent's inarticulate roar  
Blend with the storm-wind through the wood, till both  
In those inaudible harmonies silence copes,  
Die; to contest the strength of confluent streams;  
The rushing rain to face, heaven's holy rite  
Of sprinkling, oft to priest at nature's shrine  
Serving, prelustrant; to imbreast the gale  
Healthful, reanimative, the breath divine  
Of the great world spirit, that where he will,  
Blowing with aery baptism reimpregns  
With new life principles man's sacred frame;  
Desert and savage shore to roam, all thought  
Feeling, strung tense by soleness, and the sense  
Of high equality with aught create;  
Star-like, to haunt wastes spatial, where alone  
Mid clear aired wilds the sunfires purify  
And founts rock smitten of God, the spirit sincere,  
Insensible of limits, may grow to feel  
Like broad simplicity; and learn to love  
Of very lonesomeness the elements,  
Our kingly kin tetrarchal, as the powers  
That start all shapes, and close; uniting thus  
Things sensible and things animate in one realm,  
Our own heart's royalty;—thus aye to live  
Part absolute of the world's essential cause,  
Free, arbitrary; creative of all truth  
Conviction, mental impress; in oneself  
Enjoyer of the universe, co-mate  
With nature's eldest dignities, self ordained,  
Self consecrate, enthroned, is to regain  
Our birthright from us filched by the false world,  
Irreverent, mean; our heart to re-immense  
In being's primal font; our covenant faith  
With nature reaffirm, and so accept  
Absolvement by the eternal spirit from life's  
Vain toils and deadening trivialities; renew  
Our soul's first sacrament, and take in God  
With mindful extasie to ourselves, and sense  
Of the world-bosoming deity, who all  
By reason made, in love sustains, and, just  
In judgment, all will bless; 'tis to conceive

By force of vital sympathies the whole :  
 And be, and act through all ; it is to feel  
 Our spirits collateral flow with time's broad flood,  
 Even as our heart's blood coursing aye, like pulsed  
 With earth's unhesitant streams ; 'tis to possess  
 Souls self adjusted to the whole round of things,  
 The central life, the infinite. Man alone,  
 Conscious alike of nature and of God,  
 Brings both into communion ; sanctifies  
 With sympathy the naked elements ;  
 And—like the mediator he is, inspires,  
 Appreciative of all his blessings here,  
 That joy in God God's works enkindle in him.  
 When thus by wisdom's clearsight he first views,  
 With eye grown practised to the infinite,  
 Whether on mount, mid desert, or withdrawn  
 In chambered loneliness and studious calm,  
 Those inner spheres wherein dwell goodness, truth ;  
 Peace, love, the inborn sense of God ; and knows  
 That God subsists in virtue and holiness,  
 As in material forms the essential force  
 Impalpable, yet there,—which underlies  
 The common properties of things ; 'neath all  
 Defect perfection ; soul-spheres these that rule,  
 And mould this volatile world whose shows, that hour  
 Lift themselves lightly off mistlike, we find  
 Instamped through being's universal self,  
 Proof of our prime conception there ; and here,  
 To such as love humanity, divine  
 Adoption : and, life's loftiest end to come,  
 A spirit regenerate, glorified, in full  
 Concord with God and nature. Such delights  
 Of sun, sea, hill, and bleak and windbleached wastes,  
 And silence superhuman of the skies,  
 Are in wise solitude as the drumming world  
 Knows not nor dreams of. Enter therefore thou  
 Into thyself, and be at one with God.  
 Thus being, we truest live. To will what's just ;  
 To love what's pure ; to seek man's peace as God's ;  
 And aid his worthier aims ; to feed on truths  
 Soul-liberating, supreme ; our daily choice  
 Being such to assimilate, and to all commend  
 As gracious, saving, best, makes us in part  
 Celestial, and in ours inhearts the faith  
 Of everlasting being. Prophetic man  
 Who can foreset the stars their stations ; winds  
 Weigh ; and his own mind's virtues deify,  
 A larger, freer, happier, holier life  
 Shall lead than all the painful pietism  
 Of peddling sects could compass. God's great dower

To the accepted spirit of life eterne,  
 Seems in excess no more when those he loves  
 He with the fulness of perfection crowns,  
 The gift of his own nature ; through the soul's  
 System so working that it is he who us  
 Capacitates to enjoy, and is himself  
 The enjoyment he confers ; feast, host, guest, grace  
 And blessing ; teaching that, with us, to strive  
 For heaven is heaven ; to love God is to be,  
 Ourselves, divine. For as yon space spanning bow,  
 The miracle of a moment, which adorns  
 And seems all things to comprehend, earth, sea  
 And firmament made its debtors, proud to pay  
 Their subsidy of admiring joy, its end  
 Achieved, God's truth to certify, in the skies'  
 Boundless and formless unity disappears ;  
 So, arched an instant on the eternal disk  
 Of life divine, man's soul,—embracing here  
 This world-frame in itself, each, but for heaven,  
 Baseless, incredible,—ceasing gradual, grows  
 With its object one ; this death-conditioned life,  
 These vari-coloured pomps of transient time,  
 These elements of existence dropped, whose end  
 Is as was their beginning ; and assumed  
 In plenitude of deity, and the immense  
 Seclusion of his essence, reattains  
 Identity with being still ours, once all.

*Clara.* How deeply doubly dear are beauties seen  
 Never enough, but now untimely lost.

*Festus.* It is this o'erglooms, o'erwhelms me. Life's  
 best aims,  
 Seclusion's studious joys, conceptive mind,  
 Peopling the void with many a voice and shape  
 Of truth impersonate, heeding not alone  
 This day-wave on whose feathering ridge we ride,  
 But the wild world of billows bound to break  
 Yet on time's patient shore ; home's daily dues ;  
 The converse spoken or writ of a choice friend ;  
 Words winnowed well of sages of the light,  
 Garnered in books, the elect of ages, crowned  
 By man's depurate judgment, have so long  
 Consoled me, so long made, still to me make,  
 With the delightful talk of one I love,  
 Society, and in rich exchange supplied,  
 For the tumultuous trifling of the times,  
 And their puffed out inanities, a retreat  
 Complacent, where the soul, of wisdom's charms  
 Fired, may the shades of kingly sages guest,  
 Earth's silver-shielded band of minds immortal,  
 The livelong day,—listing them sadly enlarge

On virtue and the good most high of life ;  
 The passionless perfection of our race ;  
 On being and becoming,—the eterne  
 Entangled in the temporal,—reason, truth  
 Essential, and divine fate ;—or, though fixed,  
 Where fancy, palmer-wise, at will, may roam  
 The faëry fields of fiction and romance,  
 Alive with princely knights, queens, giants, churls ;  
 Enchantresses steel castled, whose wan smiles  
 Win realms, but too soon, at a breath, dissolved :—  
 Or isles of song Elysian, trode by muse  
 Rose crowned, new ditties hilding day by day ;—  
 That I, thus privileged, dare not deem me all  
 Unblessed, nor my Lord chide for good desired,  
 Withholden ; rather, even as now, on life  
 Passed, calmly ruminant, on the unmeasured tracts  
 Of world-lore reaped ; and death deriding truths,  
 Heaven-planted in man's soul, wrung by brave hand  
 Guided of angels, from the stifling clutch  
 Of unveracious faiths, 'tween God and man  
 Intrusive, but amended, sanctioned now  
 By the hallowing spirit, his disentangling hand  
 All life's knots smoothening, recognize ; nay, him  
 More heartfully revere, who the free boon  
 Of everlasting union, sharing here  
 With whom he would, in arbitrary delight,  
 All lesser gifts discards, with one more grand  
 His favourites to consumm.

*Clara.*

Hours such as these

To me, time's worthiest seem ; yes, when we die,  
 Memory will bless those moments most in life  
 We passed in worship, drinking in the breath  
 Of the Great Spirit, who with his presence fills  
 Impalpably, the whole ; but of whom the wise  
 Only aware, a life co-apt, within  
 His definite governance, live. Oh, I have felt  
 At such times as my heart had wings ; nay, what  
 Lacked, that we took not flight at once, for heaven ?

*Festus.* To know all these, life's purest, loftiest joys,  
 Commensurate even with mind, death-doomed ; to feel  
 Earth hourly fail, might sadden us,—gloried not  
 Faith more in God's decree than man's desire.

*Clara.* Yon sun, whose sea-set here, to happier globes  
 Bodes light-birth ; yon faint crescent, in the sky  
 Airily hovering, like to a spirit scarce 'scaped  
 From death-pyres still aglow ; yon snow-piled peaks  
 Clouds pearly o'erfilm ; all things invite, as though  
 On his own one day—paled half of sanctity,  
 Of joy half—God had smiled ; to round with thought  
 Divine and meditative, on him who made.

Than that, nought fitter, nor more blessed, though earth  
 And we at the next breath, ceased. Having all we would,  
 Even as in heaven, free commune, Lord ! with thee,  
 To whom all life instinctive, tree and flower,  
 Breathe, thankful for their being, praise ; and hill,  
 River and grove, and high towered town, remote  
 Their universal hymn attune, let us  
 Our gratulant souls unite with nature's ; we  
 As some their life-loved union, ours with God,  
 Thus, praiseful consecrating.

*Festus.* What need ? As when  
 Midst summer's still noon we, cliff-chaired, view earth,  
 And sea, land-locked, lost in each other's arms,  
 Union ineffable ; so of perfected souls,  
 One with the natural deity they adore ;  
 God hears the unworded worship. Think on him.

*Clara.* Nature is free-tongued. All things need their  
 word.

Yon clouds, these flowerets which perfume our feet,  
 In masses golden and azure and all hues,  
 In splendour with each other vieing, to me,  
 Day's dewy footsteps nightwards seem to grace  
 With notes of venerated praise. Blend we with theirs,  
 While those yet poise their delicate pinions, these  
 Their incense freelier pour, earth's vesper hymn !

*Festus.* Nay then, me fellow celebrant with thyself  
 Hold, priestess : for, nor shrine high roofed, with arch  
 Marmoreal, nor orbicular dome, need we ;  
 Nor interpleading choir our spirits to guide  
 Godwards ; between the immaculate heavens and us  
 No form its shadow casts. Soul-worship pure  
 Leaps at one infinite bound from prostrate hearts  
 Into God's bosom, where transmute it bides,  
 And with the eternal ones. Not these alone ;  
 All things, O God, by thee made, are to thee  
 Holy, and with true praisefulness inspired ;  
 Nature and all her powers, thy servitors,  
 Our friends and fellow-worshippers : and man,  
 Arch-priest of earth, most bounden thee to adore.  
 Thou, O great sun, whose life eliciting ray  
 But shadoweth forth his greater grace, who showers  
 On spiritual and natural world alike  
 His inexhaustless good : sun-kindler, him,  
 Sun-quencher, praise thou and adore, who thee  
 Fixed in full heaven his mighty miniature ;  
 Him, infinite centre, unseen, from whose force  
 Original, radiate all things, and to whom,  
 Inly illumining every soul of life,  
 Parental, they relapse ; even as thy beams,  
 Though world-soiled thine all brightening breast regain.

Sun, magnify thy maker !

*Clara.* Moon, whose gleam  
Reflective, types the God-light, wherewith shines  
Man's soul, lead thou, through each sabbatic change  
That errant essence to One invariable ;  
And, as some pilgrim maid, from shrine to shrine  
Circling, insatiate of all sanctities,  
Her resolute soul to expand with fullest faith,  
And holiest memories ; teach us, light of night,  
By thy superb procession through yon skies,  
Mansioned with many a world of bliss, to enlarge  
Our spirits with love of God, nor know of wane,  
Save in the world's attraction ; so best serving  
Our Lord and thine.

*Festus.* Twin spheres, perpetual rest  
This showing, pauseless motion that, between  
Whose fires, for purifying, the storied day,  
The night, earth's star tipped shadow pass, and space,  
World spangled, 'neath whose sensible folds, his garb,  
The formless spirit within we trace ; your Lord  
Attest, the eternal reason of the whole ;  
Hidden in himself, self manifestive cause ;  
Former of forms ; who, source and sum of life  
Bade being be ; and, from his boundless deeps  
Of reason, drew law primitive and supreme.  
Ye orbs, self moved, which, rounding with our own,  
The infinite within, without, yourselves  
Find nought but God, oh, shout aloud your proofs,  
All heavens may hear ; and even the nebulous star,  
Of pale, irresolute sheen, with fearful joy  
Vibrant, conclude God is, our Lord, our Sire ;  
Not chaos, chance, nor matter ; law inert,  
Unconscious ; nor yourselves, contingent, weak,  
Who might have been, as now, or not have been.  
Chance hurled him prostrate in the dusk when asked  
The crucial question ; chaos cowed his head  
In twice redoubled darkness, witting nought ;  
Mute matter heard not ; no ! it was mind most skilled  
All made by one omnific word ; all named  
His children ; laid on every head his hand,  
Whose radiant impress shows there still ; and dowered  
With natural life, second to nought save soul.  
Wherefore, bright worlds, your parent spirit exalt ;  
Leap 'mid your solar dance ; with awful mirth  
Joy in yourselves and gladden in your God.  
He through your space spread to me, of light and peace,  
And fates more blessed than these, of rights divine  
And heavenly royalties, his starry rede  
To man predictive speaks, whose words are worlds.

*Clara.* Stars restful, who, day's dazzling veil withdrawn,

Heaven's sanctuary illume, your laws, powers, spheres,  
 Graduate, each gift of the variousness he sole  
 Holds in perfective fulness, reason of thanks  
 Past numbering, him, through all life mundane, adore  
 Harmoniously. Time's tawdry pageants pass.  
 States, empires come—pause, vanish. O'er yon hills,  
 Your globed fires, in dread-fraught sameliness  
 Of time and place, rise punctual. Shall stars show  
 More than their founder, faithful?

*Festus.*

Hear, all orbs,

Moveless, or who, persistent in extremes,  
 Course fast and far the firmament, and, ours quit,  
 Warm ye full oft by alien hearths; while proud  
 Of chaste and chartered liberties, your sire,  
 Source, force and end of every law by him  
 To creatures limited, he by all bonds unbound,  
 Above law, praise the Lawgiver; who poured ye forth  
 As from an urn of life; flooding with light  
 All space, but gave space, light, life, bound and scope;  
 Order divine, connate with heaven; and form,  
 First of all laws, whereby the immensurable,  
 To finite fitted, fills the organic whole:  
 Mirror material of substantive mind;  
 For nothing finite, nought conceivable  
 By us, can of itself be, more than God,  
 Beyond thought, to aught else existence owe.  
 Effect pretemporal of eternal cause,  
 Heaven in thy highest reach, thy starriest depth,  
 Thy bosom's inmost infinite, sanctify,  
 With thy voluminous silence him all wise;  
 Who, holding all perfections absolute  
 And necessary, as all conclusions time,  
 As space orbs, as earth nature's countless germs,  
 The great progressive power which prompts with life  
 Their self-renewing functions, and unseals  
 The flowing forces of this sensible sphere—  
 Aye tabernacleth in thee.

*Clara.*

And thou, O earth,

Who movest in music, like a harper's hand,  
 White among gleamy chords, thine elements,  
 Stringed fourfold, laud him with all sounds of joy;  
 With joy august and dread, great mother world,  
 Whose veins within, the fire Promethean stolen  
 Truly of heaven, and him, who planned the plains  
 Ætherial, streams from unbeginning time  
 To time unending; cease not, earth, his praise,  
 Who in himself imbreasts both thee and heaven.

*Festus.* O heart of fire, which, central, towards our feet  
 Throbbeest, through rock girders zone wide, and huge halls  
 Where stalactital mountains hang, and whence

Are fed the deep gorged volcanoes that erst scarred  
 With channelled flame-floods and hot torrent ore,  
 Earth's soft face, healing now ; material shape  
 First looming, which, uncurbed and uncompressed,  
 Swept'st o'er the naked void, a burning mist ;  
 Till, stiffened gradual, the constituent mass,  
 Once reek-like, severing into self-poised spheres,  
 In gravity rejoiced, space circling ; him  
 Greet as liege loyal Master, who, of old,  
 On the high mount of world enlightening law—  
 For law is love defined—toward those who brake  
 So soon the tabled stones of blessing, tamed down,  
 And tempered into intolerable blaze,  
 The eye glance of his wrath ; fire, praise thou God ;  
 Earliest of worldly rudiments, and last ;  
 Voracious even of death, though bodiless,  
 Though soulless. Retributive cause, him praise.

*Clara.* Grey ocean, folding in thine arms our earth  
 Still shrinking tremulous from the booming shock  
 Of thy foam-crested legions, laud the arm  
 Which, forceful, hallowed thine abysmal bed.  
 All not thine own, with other throned thieves—  
 Thou must yield up. What justice bids restore  
 In thy store count not. Neither quite despair.  
 The prayers of purity and of penitent sin  
 Like favourites be of God. He, righteous, reads,  
 As through a tear in nature's eye, thy deeps  
 Reluctant ; and just restitution claims  
 From thee, from all, before acceptance. Night  
 And morn, thy voice, or tolling to repose  
 I hear, or whispering out of sleep. To earth's  
 Tongue, and all elements, join then, Ocean, thine ;  
 Him equitable, only unsearchable, name.

*Festus.* Tides, that with tranquil transport woo the  
 shore,  
 Or vehement rapture roused by passionate airs,  
 O'lash, cymbalwise, your white hands. He is God  
 Who fashioned you, evoked you from the void  
 Impalpable of vapour, and with force  
 Mobile, as with resistless will endowed.  
 Spell over in every wave his words of love,  
 When first he taught you whence ye were ; and when,  
 Wearied with vast librations to and fro,  
 And sparklings infinite, twinkling time away,  
 Your deep breasts heave with long and dreamy swell,  
 Let his dread name, untongued, initiate sleep,  
 And hallow all your calm.

*Clara.* Him, ebb and flood,  
 Now heaped in billowy darkness, now ungloomed  
 By streamy globelets of liquescent flame,

Like light chaotic struggling for free life,  
 Worship in all your width; who bade ye flow  
 From fountains elemental, and condensed,  
 In the cool concave of his spacious hand,  
 The world air limitless, wherein he breathed  
 All being into being. Laud your God.

*Festus.* Winds, tireless wayfarers of air, like aged  
 With the beginning, his all fatherly lips  
 Bless, that from dull vacuity woke ye, now  
 Laden with death tempestuous, but with wafts  
 Oftener of his world vivifying breath,  
 Who matter into movement touching, gave ye  
 To rove the earth as spirits space: his name  
 In secret sigh as lovers wont, therewith  
 All elements divinizing; and while ye sweep  
 Earth in bland waves ærial, gales health-rife,  
 The white wheat winnowing for high granaries,  
 A life-whole benediction breathe. What less  
 Can creature its Creator give? What more?  
 Him whirlwinds, hurricanes, wild winged storms, confess,  
 Earthquakes, and powers pernicious; that the breast  
 Of this fair orb have rent aforetime; nor  
 This sole; but once disrupting into space  
 Our midmost planet, shot, diffuse through void,  
 A shower of falling worlds; just judgment;—praise  
 Destructive him, him recreative, who yet  
 Those shattered world-shards shall restore, conglobed  
 In innocent unity, and to happier life  
 Their intercursive tenants. Meteors, him,  
 And lightnings, laud with thunders thousandfold,  
 Who do his bidden hests, and justify  
 God's dealings, when beneath high bannered tent,  
 The feastful conqueror, thunder riven, down drops  
 Before his guests astound; or, on his throne,  
 Struck by a falling star, loosed from God's hand,  
 The tyrant, curse incarnate, suddenly ends  
 In face of all the land he had outraged. Him,  
 Agents of wrath and angels of his ire,  
 Laud, who, too, slays with uncompassionate bolt  
 Shepherd and sheep blameless alike, in shade  
 Of weathering crag, death dreamed not of, nor ill;  
 Praise him, nathless, that man's whole race may know  
 Submiss, prepared, the incomprehensible One;  
 Who in himself all motives, means, and ends,  
 Compriseth, first and final cause of things.  
 Nor by necessity he, nor dubious choice  
 Of specious good, acts; but the best wills, does,  
 As absolute viewed, now, relative or eterne.

*Clara.* Snow, with thy voiceless tongue, from either  
 pole

To zenith, preach in godliest silence God ;  
 Who ice and frost, thy sterner brethren, armed  
 With glassy key to lock earth's lifewarm veins ;  
 Praise him reanimative. Thy glistening down,  
 Thy blossoming starlets, thy crystalline flowers,  
 White as the wing of angel waved in heaven  
 Only, shed thankful. God exalts the pure.  
 On peaks sky peering, and earth's orbèd brow  
 Upturned as in God's arms, thy Lord adore.

*Festus.* Night's dazzling dancers, tall-speared, which  
 invade

Air northward, with explosive rays, the stars'  
 Pale armies routing breathless, and sure morn  
 Confounding with false outbursts ; ominous once  
 Of imminent battle strife, fear's restless ears  
 Deafening with clash imaginary of arms ;  
 With all your fiery tongues, lambent of heaven,  
 Peal forth to God your resonant thanks, that ye,  
 Mere militant maskers known, men now your play  
 With curious questings mark, and cheerful awe ;  
 For knowledge hath undreaded ye ; no more  
 Prefigurative of war. Haste, days of peace,  
 Humanity's perfection, peace ; our path  
 Convergent with divinity, there ; oh, haste.  
 Man shall be one in spirit as God is one.  
 Our God is Lord of peace.

*Clara.* Breathe, glittering bow,  
 All hued, ere burst, as though from beauty o'ertense,  
 Thy brief, bright life throughout, one solemn thought ;  
 God's oath, how thankworthy ; the passed passed by ;  
 Which, sparing earth, thee special witness hight,  
 Man's heart to reassure 'gainst ruining storms ;  
 While far beyond, bides aye the intent divine  
 Of precreative love. Him, bow of heaven,  
 God's holy oath made visible here, adore.

*Festus.* Laud him ye cloudlets snow-bosomed, which  
 morn  
 Or eve serve, golden robed ; or, rich in rain,  
 Blend tearful blessings with the reviling blast ;  
 Praise ye, whose life expends itself in good,  
 The source surceaseless of all blessings. Hymn  
 Your God, while hurrying on wing-footed winds,  
 His messages of mercy to scorched lands  
 Dreaming of violet wreaths, dew soaked, to cool  
 Their sun seared breasts, and widening deserts strew  
 With riot of rank greenery ; or, when slow  
 Beneath the moon, ye swoon away utterly,  
 Earth breathing lightlier then ; each blade and bloom  
 Bedropped with fragrant moist ; cheer ye ; your life  
 Culmines in death ; for, from your birth-hour, known

Of no man, midst the black Atlantic, wroth  
 At ancient bans ignored, which betwixt old  
 And young world barred alliance, now with coils  
 The voiceable lightnings dart through, perfected,  
 Till life's last moment, God your whole career  
 Sums in his eye's broad purpose. What, round heaven,  
 Hath seemlier honour? Praise him for your end.

*Clara.* Storm breasting cliffs, whose feet, earth stained,  
 the deep

Laveth, as with the humility of a god;  
 Oh! of that steadfast strength make much, your Lord  
 Hath sunken you in and grounded you, as signs  
 Of his unshaken truth, against whose face  
 The spray of years from time's unnumbered tides,  
 Dashes in vain. Rocks, glory in your host;  
 Earth framer he who hath kinged you with his name,  
 And ta'en your own; whose guests are ye for life;  
 And then, make room.

*Festus.* Ye too, who sit serene,  
 Firstborn of earth and ancients of the snow;  
 Time's youthmates; mountains, solemn as God's thoughts  
 Pondering the chain of being, life with life  
 Linked in connatural lineage round to him;  
 Praise ye his favouring hand, who in earth's murk breast  
 Moulded your giant forms; who, age by age,  
 Tried ye with flood, and tested ye with fire;  
 Proved ye with darkness; racked ye patiently,  
 As schooling for perfection; and at last,  
 Crowned and consummate in all mysteries,  
 Led into sacred light, the outmost court  
 Of God's invisible temple, whose dome is life,  
 Whose sanctuary the soul; him, aye at rise  
 And set of sun, when comeliest ye appear,  
 In fiery albs arrayed and burning snows,  
 To adore fail not; for he in your most pure  
 Beauty delights; and to his heavenly eye,  
 Whose loveliness shows boundless as his love,  
 All beauteousness is holy. Laud ye him,  
 Whose mystic name heaven, secret and sublime,  
 Hath yet to you assured. Him praise, too, plains,  
 Teeming with succulent life, glebe, glade, and lea,  
 With homeliest blossoms blushing now, with fruit,  
 Boughed soon delicious; or solemnized with corn;  
 Confess who blessed you with the privilege man  
 To banquet: man, earth's king.

*Clara.* Ooy valleys, lisp  
 Well pleased, your thanks, that God's attempering hand  
 Hath smoothed ye meet for happiest ends, and made  
 Shadows substantial of the calm which broods,  
 Welkin-like, o'er those upper deeps of soul

Where glow'd the flames  
That temperate taste, the  
Hot wilds of herbage sp  
And wholesome poisons  
For our sustenance and  
Or flourish bosky; laure  
Oil-olive, guide to wisdo  
Gum, balm, acacia's sink  
Pour forth your sweet br  
Still fair, still dear, still i  
With thickening odours  
Like a swung censer thro  
*Clara.* Bloom bedded  
Luxuriates, as in recollect  
Of life prenatal in God's g  
How fair, the beautifier of  
Worship; and all ye plant  
Who quickened you from  
Suppl'd with balmy showe  
Gave daily dews; tapered  
In his fine fingers; with fri  
Pendent and plenteous; sta  
Crosswise or radiate; praise  
It was his considerate touch  
With heaven's translucent h  
In sunsets paradisa; steeper  
One moment, in ætherial sce  
With veinlets velvet lined, y  
None less, none else. O virg  
Of flowers, immaculate, vaun  
Most delicate, vaunt, not less  
Or cedarn, fane-famed, ebon  
Settim

By your own sweet song solaced, seek your end  
 In joy unlesseable: and you, tameless springs,  
 Froth flecked, that seawards gash the plashy moor;  
 Or rush, rock maddened, adown deep jagged ravines,  
 Chant, murmurous him; him, rill and runnel praise.

*Clara.* Praise him, ye rivers, vastening as ye roll  
 From ice cleft or turfed slope to where the main  
 Lurks watchful, with your waters soft and sweet,  
 To slake his lips salt parched, and tribute seize  
 In kind of his liege loves; and you, from heights  
 Flush with the eagle's eyrie, plunging, death  
 Scorning as life, for are not ye immortal?  
 And you, from chasmy and glacial wilds, death-white,  
 Or pine clad gore, leaping, cloud shrouded; praise  
 His name who on your first precipitous steps,  
 And pretty stumbling falls smiled stealthily;  
 Your infant course mapped; fed with milky mists;  
 And, guiding to good ends the waywardest course,  
 Those swift, still feet subservient made to bear  
 Treasures of sap to meadland, swathed in sward,  
 Or leagues of grain, heart strengthening; all the sun,  
 Of annual growth, or root perennial, helps  
 Mature, with you, praise him for.

*Festus.* Seas, land ringed,  
 Primæval ocean's relics, and ye fresh  
 And lucid lakelets, where the stark fisher, man,  
 First floated his rough raft, and the mud hut  
 He, beaverlike, had builded, fortified;  
 Or where, hard by, the cave-born savage left  
 His liberal bones to mell with those he had gnawn;  
 Rejoice, and bless your Maker, that in your breast  
 Lie glassed now cities and castled palaces,  
 Wood nested cots, rich mansions, gold topped fanes,  
 And seats of science; while o'er your faces skim  
 Barks self impelled, art's noblest, manliest feat.  
 God, necessary in essence, in will free,  
 Because illimitable, and free to free  
 From general law his special will and ours,  
 Power self determinative, through all his works  
 In apt proportions acts to ends well planned;  
 Rules rudest nature by dynamic law,  
 Spatially operative; his own designs  
 Oft modifying by like wise; empowers  
 Organic being with instinct; but to mind  
 Leaves liberty of motive; and himself  
 Conceals, to allow to man and angel scope  
 Accountable. Let all life praise its Lord  
 Therefore; of beasts, if tamed, as God's claimed once,  
 Ours now, whose inoffensive natures he,  
 Most amiable, as ensamples chose of his

All suffering deity ; laud him, end and head  
 Of sacrifice ; if wild, his prescience praise,  
 Which would not mean should nobler strains restrict.  
 Dwellers in ocean's wave roofed halls, who range,  
 Constant, from shoal to deep, from deep to shoal ;  
 Him worship, heavenly husbandman, who drives  
 Yearly his star-plough o'er the brine, and seeds  
 Its furrows with your innumerable hosts of life.  
 Cloud hunters, ocean now, the skies anon  
 Enthralling, greet him gratefully who gave  
 Your strength despotic, and powers of threefold use ;  
 Wave cradled, riding winds, land tripping ; hail  
 Your Maker irresponsible, who all being  
 Founded, not found made, and so justified.

*Clara.* And you, bright song birds, whose felicitous  
 lives  
 In flight, thought-swift, and music sweet as love,  
 Heart-harmony, elapse ; song, even and morn,  
 Concerted, trill, grateful to him who grants  
 Your innocent souls earth's luxuries, and in life  
 Here, something like the liberties of heaven.

*Festus.* Your kind with force, choice honoured, and so  
 allied  
 By nature's lord to the world's conscious sense  
 And rational energy, him, ye serpent seed,  
 Skin sloughing, witness annual of new birth ;  
 Him, too, ye insect tribes, thrice-lived, who joy  
 In natural resurrection, and fulfil  
 The cycle of being, glorified with wings ;  
 Of luminous bodies, ye ; or, honeyed swarms,  
 In politic craft pre-eminent, and sage use  
 Of toil divisional with constructive skill,  
 Praise : praise ye gay broods, dawn-born, night-slain, air  
 With filmy winglet fanning ; nor yet grieve. Death,  
 Impatient not for you alone, secures  
 In his dark couch, after life's giddy reel,  
 A sequel undisturbed. Ye animate notes,  
 Uneyeable, whose curt existence we  
 Laugh into nought at every breath ; yet deem  
 Your Maker bounteous. Life, how scant soever,  
 Seems good, as loaned of God, whose arm all space  
 Outspans, whose eye all mirrors.

*Clara.* Him, then, hymn,  
 O universal nature, passive power  
 Of deity, which, with the minutest thing  
 Subsistent, owest thyself totally to God ;  
 The whole embracing in thy boundless breast ;  
 Our world-sire praise ; while yet immortal man,  
 The intelligible light, silent, within,  
 Shall clearer hear than though each atom spake ;

Or every cloudlet thundered, Worship God.

*Festus.* Him worship, all of human blood who roam,  
Tribal, in wilds ; for breath, food, freedom, praise ;  
Ye more, who, fixèd, live the life refined  
Of cities, amid societies of the wise ;  
Graced with all science, learning, interchange  
Of luxuries, profitable to all, and wealth  
Art's delicate toil, or lowliest labour, earns :  
For polity based on manly rights ; for life  
Social, by moral law, with usance kind,  
Confederate, ruled ; for nature's comely boons ;  
For virtue's bonds majestic ; mind's delights ;  
The affections of the heart ; the joys of sense ;  
Man's common usefulness to man, whereby  
The general good conceived of thee, and blessed  
In that conception, issues : for the gift  
Those fitnesses to trace in all thy works,  
Which, proved the intent, glads and sublimes man's soul,  
Conclusive of resemblant powers ; and deeds  
Like, but how little like ! Him bless for power  
To separate truth from error, right from wrong ;  
For love of knowledge ; art's purifying grace ;  
For cultured mind ; for means material thrallèd  
In thousand shapes by inventive wit ; and now  
Forces of progress, aids to man's high race,  
And holy future ; succourers of the world ;  
Aye working through part ends its end complete,  
Through beauty, good, truth ; order realized,  
Expressed or thought, its way back to God's breast ;  
Seat both of law and liberty, needful each  
For mere creation ; he o'er both supreme.  
Praise him, all bounteous, for the intelligence  
Inquisitive, which from every being would wrest  
The reason of its existence, nor, tongue-stilled,  
Slacks but in gaze of thee, before whose face  
Bow angel essences, in number more  
Than night's invisible stars, wherewith, commixed,  
The forces of the universe stand ; him praise  
Who is praised of all. Praise him for power to praise.

*Clara.* Ye continents many-peopled, and all isles,  
Children of earth and ocean ; and thou, chief,  
Who hast the birthright and the blessing ; swell  
With jubilant joy, the song to him supreme,  
Father and friend of life ; who man's crude needs  
Mildens with heavenly sanctions, by seer's voice  
Or prophet's ; justice names his assessor ;  
Gives nations the reward of well-doing, peace,  
While evildoers themselves accurse by war ;  
Presumptuous states by races checks, and stress  
Of personal interaction ; now lays bare

To scoffing ages popular policy ;  
Now scheming power's recondite cunning ; heeds  
Indignant, empires wrongs reciprocate,  
Just rights upheld complacent ; to all doles  
Such excellencies as wisdom warrants. Nought  
Lacks he true 'compt of, who, with all that think,  
Most intimate secretly, cons both, and weighs  
Men's individual deeds ; which, though we feign  
Transient to hold and trivial, by him glimpsed  
Prove not phænomenal merely, but imply  
Eternal bearings ; and here rooted, there  
Fruit freely ; if to our contentment, well ;  
If otherwise, still reproachless he, whose end,  
In all creating, was to diffuse himself  
Through life in uncontaminate good ; to all  
As present, and to those he loves most nigh.  
Him, in the heights of his divinity, praise,  
The depths of his humanity ; the breadth  
Of being ; him redemptive who assumed  
Into his perfect nature ours, complete  
Deficiency ; who set in manhood, rose  
In deity, praise ; all lands, lips, nations, hail  
His laudable name ; till, passed from world to world,  
Their shining feet it reach, who, glorious, tread,  
Starpaved and straight, the streets of Paradise.  
Him, workers of the world, world-wielder him,  
Blessed in activity, blesser of repose,  
Praise ceaseless, who with alternative rest  
And action, nature's self-perpetuate scheme  
Poises ; contracting or expanding force  
The ages hoard, the hours distribute ; him  
Who, coupling life with motion, builds on rest  
Eternal heaven. Who labour's law revere,  
The sweat of honest toil, deeming a dew  
Grateful to God, more than that beads the rose,  
Laud, manful, him, ye who gaunt want, fell foe  
To life and knowledge, battling daily, yet  
Wot well where'er on earth be faith and truth,  
Aim holy or aspiration, there is God ;  
That all who do their best of hand or mind,  
Do well ; and thought devout may every task,  
Not of itself unholy, hallow. Him  
Unchangeable himself, but of all change  
Impressive ; self-necessitating cause ;  
Ye truth searchers exalt, whose trust to know  
All verity as in heaven, he, sovereign soul  
Of being, divines, and turns to simplest faith ;  
Who, more than all, is ; whom apparent things,  
Fruit transient of eternal root unseen,  
Conspire to honour, from life's primal cell,

To heaven's immeasurable arch, and hosts  
 Contiguous of all being ; which both worlds  
 Exterior and intrinsic, link in powers  
 Reactive ; and God indwelling in the world  
 Evince ; but God, most just ; who towards us acts  
 As he would have us act towards all and him ;  
 Exacting from perfection perfect deed,  
 Granting the imperfect, grace ; his equity such,  
 Who loves the spirit longsuffering like himself ;  
 But his own binds in normal righteousness  
 To manwards, and assumes the splendid coil,  
 Wherewith, attaching nature to himself,  
 True freedom means obedience to high law,—  
 Our spirits he liberates and exalts. Him praise,  
 In whose divine perception all things made,  
 Move congruous, designate for final good ;  
 Happy because all holy ; in his love  
 Boundless ; in virtue sumless ; who for us  
 Made truth compensate nature, and with light  
 Kinned and companioned her ; the soul's guide that,  
 This, body's ; him let man praise, who, empowered  
 With high capacities to administer here,  
 Creation's uses and our own, yet dares,  
 Humbly, the stores his Lord for him amassed  
 In times bygone, adjust ; and the vague force  
 Nature inbred at birth, condenses, fines ;  
 The code of life interprets ; and, inspired  
 Conform with reason, faculty supreme,  
 Divine, and to both common, truth revealed,  
 As march the ages on, makes more humane,  
 And so more worthy God.

*Clara.* Him, deeplier taught  
 In holiest mysteries, blessed o'er all in soul,  
 Simple or sage, ye of celestial strain,  
 Yet earth-born, laud, who caused ye, finite, know  
 Him infinite ; and his nature imaging  
 In your conditional essence, be to him  
 Through mediate kinship of his Son, your whole  
 Existence one sole glorifying act.  
 Though like a permanent star-cloud mid the void,  
 Insoluble, the cross, still shadowing shame  
 With honour, earth's hate thwarted by God's love,  
 Proclaim it, man redeemed, as e'er thy first  
 Of blessings. Thanks for all things, but for this,  
 Thanks threefold !

*Festus.* Oh ! it were a blessed thing  
 Faith such as thine to have held unfaltering ; ne'er  
 To have fainted, failed, waned, wavered. 'Tis as when  
 In Alp-land, on some white and fanglike crag,  
 Keen, cruel as Time's tooth, earth's blanched extreme,

Trophy of this world's desolateness, I've seen  
 A splintered cross, memorial frail, upreared  
 By perilous piety, once, and since, of aught  
 Save vulturous levity of wing, untopped ;  
 By snows path-hating, blurred ; by gelid rains  
 Glazed ; streaming, now, with long and icy tears ;  
 Now tempest-rapt from vision ; now, to the eye  
 Restored by curative lightnings ; by the sun's  
 First rays saluted, by his last ; there, still,  
 Ever, with arms outstretched, obtesting all  
 The elements, even as though sphere-kinned, it stands,  
 Dumb, but compelling God ; and the white world  
 Adjuring, to behold, that scorching shine,  
 Storm, nor all mutable seasons can defeat  
 Its changeless cheer ; itself so frail, yet sign  
 Of that's eternal ; so, 'gainst time's assaults,  
 'Gainst nature's banded powers, thy faith thou hold'st  
 Inalterable, triumphant.

*Clara.*

Yea, I hold.

*Festus.* God grant thee this to enjoy, and to the end !  
 Mine always such I dare not say ; but now,  
 Lord of our life ! of this sure, more than aught,  
 Let us, while praising thee for all, most praise  
 For thy regenerant spirit which hallowing life,  
 Ones it with thine ; whereby we dread not death,  
 The house the sun must pass through, and the sign  
 Which us initiates into heaven ; but know  
 Death means reunion with the deathless ; range  
 With our translated elders ; consciousness  
 Enlarged of the eternal spirit unmarred  
 By bodily needments ; life at one with God ;  
 And faith's huge promises,—our souls assume  
 The future, and we covenant here for heaven,—  
 Confirmed by fate. Here, and for ever, him  
 All souls, praise. Praise him, lovers of his law  
 Unwrit, word unrevealed, but to yourselves ;  
 Not for those faculties only with all life  
 Ye own instinctive, but each mental gift  
 Enlightened conscience sways ; for conscience' self ;  
 For those affections not the world, not man,  
 Not country, friendship, love exhausts, nor blood,  
 While just devotion burns in us towards him ;  
 For those high powers, conceptions, hopes, which fill  
 Or thrill our breasts ; which prophets e'er have preached,  
 Or nature hints we share, the unboundedness  
 Of time, existence, will ; the ennobling sense  
 Of duteousness towards men, of debt to God ;  
 For reason, whose undimmed outlook o'er the world,  
 Is balanced by right insight into ourselves ;  
 For a life whitening through probation, here ;

For deep convictions of a loftier lot,  
 An ampler scope of spirit, a draught of bliss  
 Endless, to be, nearer the fount ; praise him  
 Who godly care spares not, nor stores, that we,  
 Saved from our niggard selves, and unto him  
 Assimilate, may, through good deeds faith inspired ;  
 Just estimate of divine love towards all made ;  
 Life venerable and pure ; the calm supreme  
 And clear of sacred souls, the quietude  
 Intense and infinite, gain of holy thoughts ;  
 Such as he loves and lives in.

*Clara.*

Laud ye God,

Saviour and instigator of all good ;  
 Yet not the less impenetrable ! who ill  
 O'errules to good ; both mingles ; ends and means  
 Metes ; sparing now, as space were something scant ;  
 Now lavish of waste worlds ; atomic force  
 Economizing here ; there solar powers  
 Permitting perish. What then ? That sun hath long  
 Compassed its end ; this atom a world's head  
 May yet be. Him, ye just in soul, adore,  
 Who, latent deity, gives place to all,  
 And takes away ; whose holy attributes,  
 Essential as his being, ray and rule  
 From him, through all his rational works ; the source  
 Of every virtuous tie the world of soul  
 Acknowledgeth, as from wisdom's sacred breast  
 Spontaneous sprung ; whereby God laws himself  
 In natural rectitude, with all create ;  
 He who all made, himself to manifest ;  
 And to intelligent creatures gave to know,  
 Possess, communicate, his love and truth ;  
 His righteousness to emulate ; to share  
 His holiness ; his beatitude enjoy ;  
 And, in his wisdom skilled, in his intents  
 Proved, and heart purified, for others' weal  
 Most labouring, taught to crown with moral good  
 The vast divine of things.

*Festus.*

But though the mass

Be holy, yet the first-fruits God most loves.  
 Praise, therefore, him, ye sons of light, and bless  
 The communable deity, who, albeit,  
 Perpetual passion suffering at men's hands,  
 Hoards not from those he loves divinity ; him,  
 Participants of his kingly state, whose wills  
 With his conjoined, subregnant rule, the same,  
 Though in narrower round, as his ; praise him supreme,  
 Who loves the praises he in hymns inspires,  
 Or, wordlessly, imbreathes. Let all forechosen ;  
 Ambitious only of more humility ;

Exalted but to serve ; who, while in time,  
 Bide truelier in the eternal state, which rests  
 To each world proper, pillared upon the passed  
 And future in the soul, praise him ; ye, most,  
 Whose privilege is to please God perfectly ;  
 Farth this wise tolerated ; whereto ye lend,  
 Like fire from faith's accepted offering,  
 The savour of salvation ; whose heart's hope  
 That all souls might be saved, by him inspired,  
 Transfigured into fate, reads sure in heaven.  
 All ways are byeways but the way of God,  
 So broad, not thought a road. And man's wise heart  
 Which wide relations with the infallible holds,  
 Though flawed by error ; with all excellence,  
 Moral and rational ; with God immanent  
 In all things, yet transcendent over all,  
 Knows him sire, saviour, sanctifier of soul ;  
 Who in their principles cores all ends ; combines  
 Results forestablished with acts freely willed ;  
 Through body clarifies the spirit of man ;  
 And virtue made obligatory, but ruled,  
 For its validity, rise and close in him.

*Clara.* Him praise, ye generations of the passed,  
 Whose unrenown seems holier than all fame ;  
 All final history in her epitaphs  
 Of nations notes ; him, who the adopted soul  
 Fills, by sin's absolution, with rich foretaste  
 Of evil's abolition ; the world stamped  
 With total good. Praise him, ye sceptred saints,  
 With God, like-minded, glorying in his will,  
 Impeccable, who muse celestial things ;  
 Whose sins are washed away in seas of love ;  
 Who, liberate from all law, sit judging law ;  
 Whose passion for perfection sated, ye,  
 Rapt into deity, with your Lord enjoy  
 Life unitive, life eternal, life divine ;  
 Who revel in futurity, and inhale  
 The gust of inspiration at his lips ;  
 Of all worlds owner, author of all fates.

*Festus.* Who knoweth God the sum of science owns  
 The heavens record his handiwork ; the earth  
 Worships his footsteps ; life his breath repeats ;  
 The soul his image ; everlasting space,  
 The harmonies of his nature echoing, round  
 Reflects his vast extension : the great whole  
 His boundless being, and his infinite mind.

*Clara.* Midst, but apart from all, he substance gives  
 And choice, distinct from others and himself ;  
 Yet himself makes the beauty and the bliss  
 Of his intelligent universe ; its aim,

Its orderly source, its endless end ; whose rule,  
 Let justice among equals reign,—is love.  
 For he with us not varying, harsh or bland,  
 As our vain 'haviour bids, but in himself  
 All kind, sufficing, fixed ; unroughed by wrath,  
 By bribeful prayers unsmoothed ; towards all his works  
 Piteous, yea, sentient of faith's faintest sigh,  
 In all his sweetness, is by none save soul  
 Saved, apprehensible.

*Festus.* Lord, be it for me  
 With earth's triumphal hymn these lays to blend,  
 Worthy but of thy blessing that they flow  
 From gifts thou gavest, reconsecrate to thee ;  
 Whereby in thy dear love thou madest it mine  
 To interpret nature's elements, and with her  
 In all her holy tongues commune ; to live  
 In presence of our peers, the powers of heaven,  
 Sun, moon, and skies star-crowded ; clouds, winds, tides ;  
 Born of yon far blue infinite ; but all  
 Predestined to soul service ; mine to scan  
 In greatest minds' great thoughts earth's passed ; betimes  
 Fatal, foreshape the future ; mine to know,  
 In moral might towards thee deific drawn  
 All spirits in order blessed ; mine, henceforth, aye  
 To extol thee merciful as mighty ; thee,  
 Ours, and all being's, end and author, God.  
 All things in thee subsistent, thou alone  
 In thyself art ; all eyeing at one glance ;  
 All minding in one thought ; in one sole act,  
 Creating, comprehending, judging all.  
 Unalterable as silence, thy decrees  
 Are boundless and for ever. Thy delight  
 Is in the holy of heaven, and in the heart  
 Responsive to thy counsels. Even as space,  
 All things embosoming, is thy mercifulness.  
 Thy love is life ; and they who find thee here,  
 Find perfectness and peace ; eternal gifts ;  
 Peace in themselves, and perfectness in thee.

*Clara.* Hallowed and comforted the soul, elate  
 By pure prostration at God's feet, the world  
 Meets but scant welcome from us ; we half hoped  
 To have lost what soon we lose for aye and all.

*Festus.* I seek no selfish gladness, though to me  
 High thoughts are life, and life immortal more  
 Only in conception as divine than this,  
 Our perishable, in act ; yet would not I  
 Forestall apart from thee those paths, those plans  
 We have hope to perfect in eternity.  
 To search together truth space-wide ; to soar  
 In spirit unitedly through all the immense

Thus, of celestial thought gives joy sublime,  
 I know to both. As when by sunset's hues  
 Invited, some fair falcon, whose broad eye  
 Mirrors the welkin, through air's shadowy blue  
 Wheeling with wing unwavering, every plume  
 Stretched tense, mid sky serenely balanced, calls  
 Forth from her eyrie, crown of sea-faced crag,  
 His mightier mate; these twain each other now  
 In unconceived ellipse, curve following curve,  
 Redoubled rainbowlike, outswEEP; thrice o'er  
 Snatch from ambition's touch the zenith; mock  
 With playful fall the expectant earth; now, thwart,  
 In arbitrary and intercircling flights,  
 Their mutual orbits, emulous; this below  
 Echoing the other's cry on high, till heaven  
 Closes, by hint of stars, the rapt contest.

*Clara.* How near earth's end!

*Festus.*

Earth's future soon is told.

Nigher each hour, the incredible becomes  
 What sole can be; the key that all unlocks.  
 For now not only our life's exterior charms,  
 Earth's beauties perish, but mind's most treasured joys,  
 Brain-realms pictorial of creative thought,  
 Fairer than Eden, were that garden all  
 Fiction entranced, e'er dreamed. Song, art, romance,  
 Farewell! Hope is, we enjoy not only, there,  
 The future, but the passed made clear, sublimed,  
 Perfect. Perchance in life to come a glimpse  
 May ope, God good, to memory's inward eye  
 From all imperfect aims, impure views, purged  
 Of divine fable. If not, be it as God will;  
 But as when the moon at her full round arrived  
 Of beauty, uprising, level, from the main,  
 Late turbulent, smiles to behold the loyal waves'  
 Awe, and their hush low whispered hear as she  
 Venerable by birth, though young, just state assumes,  
 And splendid presidency; these, too, like pleased  
 With her exact observance of all times,  
 And the well-lawed conformity to things  
 Earthly, of things celestial and serene,  
 As mutually assurant, yield her back,  
 Considerate, smile for smile; so I,—so thou,  
 Souls like authentic, each the other's breast  
 Let fill with pure content.

*Clara.*

As far as such,

Amassed of all defects, avail.

*Festus.*

There's one

Defect we have each outlived. We part no more.

## XXXIX.

Much of the passed is prophecy ; and now,  
 All done, ambition earns his wage, earth's throne,  
 Throne than all empires wider : proof and prize  
 Indisputable of peace. A social change  
 Being wrought, with that like vast in nature's prime,  
 When the elements less gross than air, condensed  
 Into mountainous levels, broad footholds made themselves  
 Of nations,—figuring forth the fateful mind  
 Pacific, all controlling, war, and worse,  
 Could worse be, in life's penultimate age. What war  
 World wide and through all time had failed to achieve,  
 Sage peace with sensitive hand unseen, wins. Love,  
 Of mortal things last, nestles within the heart.  
 Ambition ruined by success ; doubt's last  
 Attack, see, crushed ; for though to the edge of hell  
 Despair bring one self-blindfold, yet turns not  
 Ours, heaven affianced, false to God, who tries  
 All spirits ; and this, from its own ruin at last,  
 Like a flag storm-torn, fluttering from its staff,  
 Evanishing, saves. Earth's elements discohere.

*A Gathering of Kings and Peoples.*

FESTUS *throned* ; LUCIFER, *and* CLARA.

*Festus.* Princes and Peoples ! Powers once of earth !  
 It suits not that I point to ye the path  
 I trode to reach this sole supreme domain—  
 This mountain of all mortal might. Enough,  
 That I am monarch of the world—the world.  
 Let all acknowledge loyally my laws,  
 And love me as I them love. It will be best.  
 No rise against me can stand. I rule of God ;  
 And am God's sceptre here. Think not the world  
 Is greater than my might—less than my love—  
 Or that it stretcheth further than mine arm.  
 Kings ! ye are kings no longer. Cast your crowns  
 Here—for my footstool. Every power is mine.  
 Nobles ! be first in honour. Ye, too, lose  
 Your place, in place : retrieve yourselves in good.  
 Peoples ! be mighty in obedience.  
 Let each one labour for the common weal.  
 Be every man a people in his mind.  
 Kings—nobles—nations ! love me and obey.  
 I need no aid—no arms. Burn books—break swords !  
 The world shall rest, and moss itself with peace.

*Kings.* Tyrant, we love thee not ; and we as one  
 Man will resist thee.

*Festus.* Well I know it. Mark !

Ye are all nations, I a single soul.  
 Yet shall this new world order outlast all.  
 Behold in me the doomsman of your race.  
 Will, reason, passions, all shall serve and aid,  
 Yea your most secret qualities and powers.  
 Not by the mandate of the mass as wont,  
 In times gone by for aye, to mark the elect  
 Of popular will; not by sublime descent  
 From conquering kings, sit I here; but of God  
 Called, and of wise men's wisdom, and the force  
 Supreme of reason, and law of serving love  
 Intituled and acknowledged, name me lord.

*Nobles.* Reason rebels against thee, and condemns  
 Tyrant and slave alike; exalting this,  
 Deposing that, adjusting all; as yet  
 Hope we and mean to do with thee and these.

*Festus.* And seek ye to gainstand the faith in God?  
 O blindest rulers! will ye never learn  
 Your proper region and due dominance?  
 Whatever ye rule I rule over you.  
 All unobstructed power is sanctified.  
 Divine rule is a tyranny of good.  
 Mine shall be like it. Tyrant! Well; I am.  
 I glory in the title; reverence  
 Myself, for that it is accorded me.  
 What is above this soul of mine but heaven?

*Peoples.* The opposite of rule divine is best  
 For man. Power gives temptation, which in turn  
 Sets aside honour, social duty, law,  
 And right; creates abuse, and abuse strife,  
 Confusion, retribution, bloodshed, sin.  
 Though for a season cloud and meteor, sign  
 Of transient action midst eternal calm,  
 Usurp the heights of air, yet soon the stars  
 Their peaceful reign resume; and now at last,  
 Since earth hath wiser waxed, the people theirs.  
 Therefore descend thou and make room for us;  
 Or else thy powers submit to perfect proof,  
 And our approval, ratified by all.

*Lucifer.* These are the proud divisors of times passed,  
 Brought forward to futurity: the seed  
 Of souls which live to sow dissension; souls  
 Who would suspend upon a cable's strand,  
 A continent of cavil. Go, good friends.  
 A mightier contest than ye dream, and like  
 To task all craft acuminous, waits ye yet.  
 While hangs the world together, these lack not.

*Festus.* Nations! behold the day of gladness, long  
 Craved by all righteous souls, the day of peace,  
 The feast-day of the Eternal. Sun, main, sky,

Beaming each one with God's reflected love,  
 Their vast content, united, smile. And now  
 When in these times, earth's latest days, the sea,  
 His ancient sites revindicate, reigns supreme  
 O'er all time's storied states, and powers renowned  
 Of antique policy, heirless empires, cleansed  
 By God's liege element from the blood of wars,  
 Sacred and most iniquitous, at the shrines  
 Poured, of false gods, to this terrene upheaved  
 Freshliest, and counter-shadowy, where young earth  
 Unannalled, undefiled, demands as dower  
 The mighty and immaculate future; now  
 When heaven round other star than sung of old  
 Rolls peaceful; star of conquered death, the lyre's  
 Bright paramount; when, with swift and easy shock,—  
 As toiling traveller from his shoulder shifts  
 Towards the day's end, his burthen,—earth shakes off  
 Her overpoise of old beliefs and stale  
 Traditions; and with slope celestial trimmed  
 To happier influences,—still find we things,  
 Conform to reason most, by the mass most spurned;—  
 Sad leaven of our original self-defect.

*Peoples.* This newest order of things us suits not.

*Festus.*

Nay,

Ask not how long 'twill last. Meanwhile, enjoy;  
 Reap all the harvest peace and power can give  
 Freedom and nature perfected. Let all  
 Good plans benevolence longs to realize,  
 Not yet accomplished be achieved. For what  
 Beside, were boundless power, and peace assured,  
 One only polity, one sole faith?

*Peoples.*

We trow not.

We, more than half, throw back the whole thou'dst give;  
 Want not thy boons, nor thee; would say farewell.

*Lucifer.* Their honey smacks of rue, or I mistake.

*Festus.* Man's conscience is an angel or a fiend,  
 According to his deeds. What have I done?  
 I was the youngest born of destiny,  
 The favourite of fate, and fortune's heir;  
 My word for once was law and prophecy.  
 Speak, spirit! have I forfeited my star?

*Lucifer.* Storms give to dust a privilege to rise,  
 And fly in all men's faces—even kings'!

*Peoples.* Monarch, thou rulest nought. We will thee  
 not.

*Festus.* What if a million molehills were to league  
 Their meannesses together, with due pomp,  
 And to some mountain say,—In the name of God!  
 Whither dost thou aspire? Does any deem  
 That great imperial creature would descend

From those sublimest solitudes of air,  
 Where it had dwelt in snowy sanctity,  
 For ages, ere the mud-made world below  
 Was more than half conceived, to parley there  
 At its own footstool, and lay down its crown,  
 And elemental commune with the skies,  
 Because its height was so intolerable,  
 And its supremacy termed tyranny ?  
 Why look ye all amort ? Is doomsday come ?  
 Stand forth, and speak, sole servant of my throne !  
 If aught thou hast to settle and explain—  
 Or straightway send these nations to their homes.

*Peoples.* Our home is where we rule and are content.

*Lucifer.* Ye mighty once—ye many weak, give ear !  
 I and my god—for god he sure must be,  
 In human form, who sitteth there enthroned—  
 For readier rule, and for the good of all,  
 Have cast again the dynasties of earth  
 According to the courses of the air :—  
 Therefore, from east, and west, and north, and south,  
 Four kings ministrant element-like shall bend  
 Before his feet. Harken, thou unkinged crowd !  
 Ye have not sought the good of those ye governed.  
 The people only for the people care.  
 Ye seem to have thought earth but a ball for kings  
 To play with : rolling the royal bauble, empire,  
 Now east—now west. Your hour and power is past.  
 Ye are the very vainest of mankind,  
 As loftiest things weigh lightest. Ye are gone !  
 Nations, away with them ! Nor do ye boast !  
 Ye find that power means not good, not bliss.  
 But ye would wed delusion :—now, ye know her.  
 And she is yours for life—and death—and judgment.  
 There is no power, nor majesty, save his :  
 His is the kingdom of the world and glory.  
 His throne is founded centre-deep by heaven ;  
 And the whole earth doth bless him, and approve  
 With proud assent, one-minded. As the sun  
 Fresh risen from hallowing waters which his touch  
 In turn reconsecrates, by slow ascent,  
 Persistent, but inevitable, assumes  
 The zenith, and in judgment throned, his seat,  
 As standard of all height, gives earth, gives heaven,  
 To each the same scale, this, your liege, for you  
 For all, lays down one perfect, level, law,—  
 His will ; and he, at will, will turn the world  
 As light turns earth round. Greet your lord, and go !

*Festus.* All silent ! Do they understand ?

*Lucifer.*  
 They hold thy gain their loss ; that's all.

Why, yes,

*Festus.*

O men !

O brethren ! deathless mortals, hear me once !—  
 Listen, ye nations ! would ye learn how stands  
 Your great accompt with those, earth's choice, who me  
 Have chosen, attend, while I times passed unfold,  
 Time present, times to come. Men all are born  
 To serve or rule ; no harm, if they who rule  
 Most, the most serve. To this end I, self-vowed,  
 Elect of heaven, casting in mind how best  
 I could man benefit ; and soul-grieved to know  
 Of doubts that in one's fellows' hearts and ours  
 Dare wretchedly God's being ignore, oft mouthed  
 By mock philosophy, I, self-sworn to seek  
 All truth through nature, region none of life,  
 Inner or outer spared ; while through all forms  
 Material, through the world's broad elements,  
 All science, graduating, have traced ; and joyed,  
 My way, through fires sphere-cored, the hearth of things  
 And the atlantéan axis of the world,  
 Where played time's brood, archaic, fought ; air's heights,  
 And all the undescribed circumference,  
 Where earth's thick breath thins off to blankest space,  
 Scaled ; ocean's stormy baptistery, world-walled,  
 Sounded, and trode the high exhilarant snows,  
 Sparkling like star-dust ; while all form extreme  
 Of socialty, rude, polished, tested, I  
 One sense of law, in all, one law of right  
 Finding, one sanctity of blood, proof sure  
 To man of like rise, end ; and while in all  
 These elements of conclusion joyed to trace  
 All-where, the god-print of one bounteous hand  
 Omnific, predisposant : nor, less proof,  
 Marking of power than love ; to view o'er all  
 Spread the wide wing of God propitiable,  
 Answerer of prayer, inspirer ; in all need  
 The Lord of provident goodness, by pure hearts  
 Neared only, and spirit imbued with love of God  
 And man ; a spirit which, sinning, seeks through faith  
 And penitence, re-access to him the One  
 Invariable, whose wordless name, as taught  
 By him, all orders of existence serves  
 To fraternize, all worlds, all souls unites ;  
 Nor, labouring to this end, though pleased to see  
 Science, in all her walks, keep step with faith,  
 Each purifying the other, can soul content,  
 Through nature's sensible rudiments to have passed  
 Fruitless, unless in heart, grace-taught ; but aye  
 Wretched to view faith's vast divergences,  
 One only true 'mong men, to me it came,  
 As duty and end inspired, to seek in all

The essential verity which, to each germane,  
 All linking, permeated. This hoped, through all  
 Soul-culture of the passed, and sacred creeds,  
 Initiative on earth of life divine,  
 From earliest days,—whose ruinous relics still  
 Astound, not, sole, through many a faith extinct,  
 I pilgrim-wise have toiled, but many a fane  
 Now silent, solitary, save by the sun  
 Uneved, unvisited, save by the elements,  
 With patient foot have trodden; in rock-slabbed tomb,  
 For the living built as though to expiate sins  
 Titanic; cell sepulchral midst the moor  
 For penitence reared or rites regenerative  
 Of aspirant soul; in stony ark on hill  
 Piled giant-wise, have knelt, heart-racked, to wring  
 From those dumb rocks their secret, petrified  
 Long years since, what their stone of fate, hard by,  
 And intersecting circles of good and ill,  
 Mutation, destiny, life, imported; chair  
 Piacular, scooped from cliff wherein to outwatch  
 The moon, or trace some fateful birth star end  
 Its skiey arc, oft rapturous pressed; in these,  
 Fanes roofless, wandering, stretched o'er heathy downs,  
 And pillared crags ranged rudely ring-wise, rough,  
 Shapeless, or shaped like clouds, men's first essay  
 To circumscribe the infinite, and one spot  
 Make holier than the rest where God is all;  
 Have bowed me 'neath the mystic moon, and prayed  
 Before the altar, hoary, meteoric, once  
 Encrowned with fire the flood quenched; and these quit  
 For Parian shafted shrines, shrines such as born  
 To mount Pentelic, parent of white fanes,  
 Commemorate in earth's choicest lore, to light,  
 To wisdom, sacred, to heaven's Lord; or such,  
 Columnar as illumine the broadening sands  
 Round Tchelninar or Balbeck, to the sun,  
 Hallowed of old; and thence to those cross-based  
 Which cloudward towered, or domed, here consecrate  
 The principle of divine self-sacrifice,  
 Passing, have in them all, all found, at core,  
 Identic;—heart prostrate with hand uplift,  
 Professed man's creed eternal;—God is God;  
 Nought else; the Infinite, the Eternal, one;  
 All provident nature is his prophet; man  
 His son from him first issuant back returns  
 To him by virtue, and moral light: his law  
 Is pure and righteous; in its practice, peace  
 Wisdom, salvation are. He. God, is love;  
 But just both when he punishes and forgives.

Him fear, obey, love, worship. Of all faiths  
The essence thus in mine own spirit summed  
In fanes both old and new, I, with all rites,  
The world-presiding deity, dared to adore,  
And knew such service acceptable ;—nor less  
That God's name ye might know as Love, not Fear ;  
That hope and not despair might rule your souls  
Conceptive of the future life ; that war  
Earth's vastest curse might cease, and peace the path  
Prepare of justice, know, my task hath been,  
By secret rites and sacred, many a year,—  
As might a river subterrene through caves  
Abysmal, issue sunwards seek—to gain  
Such light of truth as, lightening soul, might all  
Advantage in the scale of being ; with sense  
Of wisest justice competent to reframe  
On base right equitable man's social life ;  
With saving trust in God, the infinite mind,  
Simplest of faiths and the sole true ; with arms  
Of purest piety in prayer's fervent fires  
Wrought indestructible, so to encrown man's soul  
That nought of good, save angelhood, scarce remains  
For men to attain, that, well nigh reached ; and helped  
By sagest souls who, operating unseen  
As nature's forces, in one law supreme  
Have wrought of faith and life, and all good ends  
Knotting in one, in me have all success  
Crowned ; and all this for you.

*Peoples.*                                      Thee, king of earth,  
We want not, nor await we thy projects.  
War when we would, and when war-wearied, peace;  
Fair conquest and fair risk we rather love  
Than peace enforced, forced union.

*Festus.* Ye who speak  
Are not the whole.

*Peoples.*                      **We are most.**

*Festus.* Alas for man !

No hope. This grand reunion lasts no more  
Than my day. Seer, sage, saint, have wrought in vain.  
Thought's pettiest differences are cherished more  
Than truth's most vast congruities. In vain  
It seems, to have oped the way to truth, and peace,  
And reason's sacred cabinet, wherein all  
Earth's wise might make their conclave, and the world  
Rule bodily, spiritually ; in vain to have passed  
Through pains and perils without end, to earn  
For man the attainable results he spurns ;  
Peace universal, one pure simple faith,  
Through lifts of soul, successive, whence its view  
Widened and purified can clearer hold

Manhood's test, virtue ; and for all inspired  
 With love their kind to enlighten, and with proof  
 Perfective of each soul to serve its race  
 By loving God, and well-doing.

*Peoples.*

Be it so.

Good will we not by these means to such end.

*Others.* We, king, we homage thee. In thee content,  
 We hail the great designs of God fulfilled.  
 Thee for no other end than man to serve,  
 Enlighten, free in mind, he here hath placed.  
 Thee for our joy, our perfectness we take,  
 Our seal of earth's companionship with heaven ;  
 Our hope and our accomplished proof of good.  
 His laws the only miracles being knows,  
 And these because from nothingness his will  
 Evoked them ; matter powerless, lawless ; time,  
 Extent, life, mind, the infinite whole his own  
 Blessed spirit diffused through space, and made all good.

*Festus.* Knowledge re-oned now with belief, while men  
 Deem diversely of lesser ends, God's law  
 Moral and natural, through man's mean evolved,  
 Or demonstrate, him shows like kind and wise.  
 The world hath but just now full use attained  
 And seisin of its happiest privilege ;  
 For as one who unremembering somewhat seeks  
 He hath never truly lost, and at last knows  
 Haply in his hand or bosom, so the world,  
 God seeking, finds but in those inner heavens,  
 That peaceful and perfectible nature, man  
 Long missed, but, recollective, in his breast  
 Divinely implaced perceives ; and now, of self  
 Recognizant, by true means, ends true achieves.

*Lucifer.* Be it ! If peace content not mighty man,  
 What can ? For as the people cannot rule  
 Themselves, so neither may a crowd of kings.  
 And hence hath been the evil of the world ;  
 Now ceased for ever. War will be no more.  
 His is the sway of social sovereign peace.  
 His tyranny is love and good to all.  
 His is the vice-royed, vouchsafed, reign of God.

*Festus.* What wouldst thou angel-guard ? for I feel  
 thee near.

*Guardian Angel.* Mortal, the end draws nigh. Pre-  
 pare ! For thus  
 God justifies his ways and manifests  
 His equitable forecounsel, told in heaven.

*Lucifer.* Depart ye nations !

*Festus.*

Hark ! thou fiend, dost hear ?

*Lucifer.* Ay ! it is the death groan of the sons of men—  
 Thy subjects—King !

*Festus.* Why hadst thou this so soon?  
O men! O brethren! turn your souls to God.

*Lucifer.* Why wish the world's conversion? Presently  
God will fulfil the thousands known from first,  
Whose apex soul alone is lacking, thine.  
It is God who brings it all about—not I.

*Festus.* I am not ready—and—it shall not be!

*Lucifer.* I cannot help it, monarch! and—it is!  
Hast not had time for good?

*Festus.* One day—perchance.

*Lucifer.* Then hold that day as an eternity.

*Festus.* All around me die. The earth is one great  
death-bed.

*Lucifer.* Time's tide is nearly out, and sick folk die.

*Clara.* Oh! save me, Festus! I have fled to thee,  
Through all the countless nations of yon dead—  
For well I knew it was thou who sattest there,  
To die with thee, if that thou art not death:  
And if thou wert, I would not shrink from thee.  
I am thine own, own Clara!

*Festus.* Thou art safe!  
Here in the holy chancel of my heart—  
The heavenly end of this our fleshly fane,  
I hold thee to communion. Rest thee safe.

*Clara.* Men thought I was an angel, as I passed;  
And caught up at my feet—but I 'scaped all.  
I knew I should die by thee: the soul that loves  
Soul-wise alone gives forth true oracles.

*Festus.* Then there is faith among these mortals yet.  
Thy beauty cometh first, and goeth last—  
Willow-like. Welcome!

*Clara.* Oh! I am so happy!

*Festus.* I speak of thee as of the dead;—the dead  
Are alway faithful.

*Clara.* I will stay with thee—  
Though angels beckon—may I? Let me, love!  
I dare not—cannot, take mine eyes from thee,  
For fear of looking on the dead. Dear Festus!  
I think of thee as when I loved thee first;  
For all time since, even as the ebbing sea  
Falls in its rise, and loses in its gain,  
My heart ne'er passed that hour. It soothes me now.

*Festus.* Well, too, I mind me of that day; a day  
Fragrant from first to last with sunny flowers;  
Of cloudless light, of cloudless love; it passed:  
Eve came; the dewy night stole forth, dim-veiled;  
Arcturus, heavenly oxherd, bowed his knee  
Star-cusped, upon the hill, as though with all  
His worlds he worshipped God; his conquering head  
Bowed 'neath the orb-gemmed crown, hollow with heaven,

God o'er him holds as one who had striven with God,  
 And gained the day o'er deity. Oh ! no more !  
 Shall we not mind us of that day in heaven ?  
 Thou art the only one hast answered me,  
 Love to love—life to life.

*Clara.* Oh ! I am dying !  
 The heavens are pressing down upon me. God  
 My father seeks the spirit of his child.

*Festus.* Go, golden lily, bloom thou on the breast  
 Of everlasting sanctity.

*Clara.* Farewell !  
 Give me one kiss—the kiss of life and death—  
 The only taste of earth I will take to heaven.  
 Here ! let me die, die in it !

*Festus.* Last and best !  
 Now am I one again. Oh ! memory runs  
 To madness, like a river to the sea.  
 These long illustrious tresses, gold of gold,  
 Yea, very gold of very gold, which here  
 Insult all thought of limit ; to my touch  
 Dearer than were the sceptre of the sun,  
 Wave me no more bright welcome ; and these lips,  
 Whose animated silence sweetlier told  
 Than talk of other angel, move no more  
 In silence or in sound ; these bright brown eyes,  
 Still as extinguished stars, no more reflect  
 The virtues of the heavens. Man's world of old,  
 Began with woman, mother of all life ;  
 And, after countless ages, now, with thee,  
 Bride of my soul, death's youngest daughter, ends.  
 Our union is, and hath been, most in mind,  
 That perfect, yea, that hallowed ; and I end,  
 As I began, sole as the sun in heaven.  
 Happy as heaven have I, love, been with thee !  
 Thine innocent heart hath passed through a pure life,  
 Like a white dove, wing-sunned through the blue sky.  
 A better heart God never saved in heaven.  
 She died as all the good die—blessing—hoping.  
 There are some hearts aloe-like, flower once, and die  
 And hers was of them.—Thrall art thou and free :  
 Free of immortal life though bound of death.  
 Not the emotional surface of the sea,  
 Whose form from things without is ta'en, but more  
 The deep essential quiet of its bed,  
 Thy soul resembled in the pure profound.  
 Thy love to me was as the morning dew,  
 Earth's liquid jewellery, wrought of air,  
 Young nature's christening ; whose every bead,  
 Round as the globular genesis of things,  
 And bright as heaven's own gems in diamond set,

Emblemed its pure perfection o'er this heart ;  
 Now sun parched, thunder scorched ; yet stricken thus,  
 Feeling myself each hour, each pulse-beat drawn,  
 More mightily drawn, to join and glory in  
 All being's everlasting sense of God.  
 I see the universe made clear with light,  
 Holy with spirit, pure with deity ;  
 Man the dear son of God to God returned,  
 And earth's renascent nature throned in heaven.  
 The voice of ages, syllabled in suns,  
 Pronounces God's unceasing benison  
 Upon his bright creation. Time is touched  
 On all hands by the Eternal : and the world  
 Is bounded, rounded, ended but by heaven.  
 Therefore the soul, in death resilient, looks,  
 Backwards to whence its impulse came, to God ;  
 And all things lovely and divine that here  
 It loved in spirit, are too, with it conjoined,  
 And mingled with the future of the stars,  
 And blissful occupation of all space.  
 As, pending time, the passed and future cause  
 Chief reasons, and the present but a point,  
 So in eternity all's presentness.  
 Hence therefore from me now all thoughts of earth ;  
 Be they as in a lake of lightning quenched ;  
 In lone annihilation lie entombed ;  
 And memory's pall be buried with the bier.  
 There lies my soul's sole love : and lo ! all life,—  
 In such time as the pale self-flattering moon,  
 Who loves to see her likeness in all lakes,  
 Hath ta'en from her first starlike peep above  
 The hill, to free wholly her silvery breast,  
 Her upper and her lower limbs of light,  
 From dark, detentive earth, and, spurned all ties,  
 Of all attractions 'sdeignful, southening, soars  
 Calm, but unpiteous, heavenward,—life hath ceased ;  
 And silence reads the dead world's burial tale.  
 And death sits quivering, there, and watering  
 His great gaunt jaw at me. When must I die ?  
*Lucifer.* Say ! dost thou feel to be mortal or immortal ?  
*Festus.* Away !—and let me die alone.  
*Lucifer.* I go :—  
 And I will come again : but spare thee, now,  
 One hour, to think——  
*Festus.* On all things. God, my God !  
 One hour to sum a life's iniquities !—  
 One hour to fit me for eternity—  
 To make me up for judgment and for God !—  
 Only one hour to curse thee ! Nay, for that,  
 There may be endless hours. God ! I despair,—

And I am dying. Let me hold my breath !  
 I know not if I e'er may draw another.  
 I feel death blowing hard at the lamp of life  
 My heart feels filling like a sinking boat ;  
 It will soon be down—down. What will 'come of me ?  
 It is as I always wished it ;—I shall die  
 In darkness, and in silence, and alone.  
 Even my last wish is petted. God ! I thank thee ;  
 It is the earnest of thy coming—what ?  
 Forgiveness ? Let it be so : for I know not  
 What I have done to merit endless pain.  
 Is pleasure crime ? Forbid it, God of bliss !  
 Who spurn at this world's pleasures, lie to God ;  
 And show they are not worthy of the next.  
 What are thy joys we know not—nor can we  
 Come near thee in thy power, nor truth nor justice ;  
 The nearest point wherein we come towards thee,  
 Is loving—making love—and being happy.  
 Thou wilt not chronicle our sandlike sins ;  
 For sin is small, and mean, and barren. Good,  
 Only, is great, and generous, and fruitful.  
 Number the mountains, not the sands, O God !  
 God will not look as we do on our deeds ;  
 Nor yet as others. If he more condemn,  
 Shall he not more approve ? A few fair deeds  
 Bedeck my life, like gilded cherubs on  
 A tomb, beneath which lies dust, decay, and darkness.  
 But each is better than the other thinks.  
 Thank God ! man is not to be judged by man ;—  
 Or, man by man the world would damn itself.  
 What do I see ? It is the dead. They rise  
 In clouds ! and clouds come sweeping from all sides,  
 Upwards to God : and now they all are gone—  
 Gone, in a moment, to eternity.  
 But there is something near me.

*Spirit.*

It is I.

*Festus.* Go on ! I follow, when it is my time.  
 Not perfect yet the complement of heaven.  
 There is no shadow on the face of life :  
 It is the noon of fate. Why may not I die ?  
 Methinks I shall have yet to slay myself.  
 I am calm now. Can this be the same heart  
 Which slept when sleep it did from dizziness,  
 And pure rapidity of passion, like  
 The centre circlet of the whirlpool's wheel ?  
 The earth is breaking up ; all things are thawing.  
 River and mountain melt into their atoms ;  
 A little time, and atoms will be all.  
 The sea boils ; and the mountains rise and sink  
 Like marble bubbles, bursting into death.

O thou Hereafter ! on whose shore I stand—  
Waiting each toppling moment to engulf me—  
What am I ? Say, thou Present !—say, thou Past !  
Ye three wise children of Eternity !  
A life ?—a death ?—and an immortal ?—all ?  
Is this the threefold mystery of man ?  
The lower, darker Trinity of earth ?  
It is vain to ask. Nought answers me—not God.  
The air grows thick and dark. The sky comes down.  
The sun draws round him streaky clouds, like God  
Gleaning up wrath. Hope hath leapt off my heart,  
Like a false sibyl, fear-smote, from her seat,  
And overturned it. I am bound to die.  
Why wait, then, here, as an o'erfreighted cloud,  
Abandoned by its lightlier winged convoy,  
Lags, in some shadowy hollow of the hills,  
Scapeless, till death, how dilatory ! dissolve.  
God ! why wilt thou not save ? The great round world  
Hath wasted to a column beneath my feet.  
I will hurl me off it, then ; and search the depth  
Of space, in this one infinite plunge ! Farewell !  
To earth, and heaven and God ! Doom ! spread thy lap ;  
I come—I come. But no ! may God forbear,  
To judge the tempted purpose of my heart !  
He hath established here, and he will save ;  
And I can smile destruction in the face.  
Let his strong hand compress the marble world,  
And wring the starry fire-blood from its heart ;  
Still on this earth-core I rejoice in God ;  
I know him and believe in him as Love,  
And this divinest truth he hath inspired,  
Mercy to man is justice to himself.  
To have held the truth is something, maybe. Yes !  
As when in time's remote, even life's gay youth,  
Adventurous, tramping upland tracts, towards eve,  
Following the sun from rise to rise we spring,  
And clearing just this eminence now, now that,  
Stretch quick our stride, and hold him yet in heaven,  
Nor let depart till certain quite he has marked  
As cognizant witness, how we have toiled to keep  
His golden company, so one sole truth  
God in the soul, attested, glorified,  
Pursued through life, I feel, hold still at last  
Supreme, consolatory. It lights me here ;  
And will, till nature's night. But now compute  
Thy deeds unwise, thy wasted times and means,  
Disservice of the pure, the true, and judge  
Thyself condemnable, if in part alone ;  
Judge justly, judge impartially. But how ?  
Like to the mighty leaves of light, shook off

Autumnal from the tree of time, which strew  
In stormy incandescence the sun's heart,  
My thoughts, confusedly burning, waste away  
This world-enlightener. Soul, what hast thou done ?  
Hast brought forth a new God, or all the heavens  
Stripped of their shining shams and shown the true ?  
Earth's spiritual idols hurled to hell ?  
Behold them, ghosts of gods, the evanishing reek  
Of lights extinguished. I have seen them all  
Huddled in Hades ; lives that live no more,  
Fast fading into sheer nonentity.  
Hast thou, with all things granted to thy wish,  
Wrought out thy sovereign end, to warm the world  
To worship, love, pure life, thy solar will ?  
Thy heaven-wide mark, thine universal aim ?  
Alas ! how futile action weighed 'gainst thought !  
What mountainlike conceptions swell the mind !  
What monumental molehills we achieve !  
O grief, O woe, that I so much have thought  
Of self ; of God so little. Yet to know  
Him, holy, gracious, giver of all good,  
Forgiver of all evil, were surely enough  
To sate the insatiable. In him we rest,  
Our spiritual universe, in him  
Move, as the self-revolving orbs in heaven.  
And O ! thou strange mysterious universe,  
Eternal, unconceived, star-studded heaven,  
Who art in God, and God in thee ; and we  
Of both, and in both, sovereign slaves of law,  
Founded we know not or by whom, or how ;  
Canst thou not aid us to conceive ourselves,  
Atoms of thine entirety, double-natured,  
But powerless separate, seeing only this ;  
Matter, if indestructible, always was,  
And aye must be ; mind, too, if force defined ;  
And though immortal both, yet vital only  
And individual, when by laws combined ?  
What then ? Are unintelligent laws alone  
The rulers of the universe, and God  
A metaphysic fiction ; am I God ;  
As bud, tree rudimental ? As a seal's  
Reverse impression, signifying yet  
One only meaning, spelling one same word ?  
As part material, objective to God ?  
As immaterial, subjective with him ?  
As thus, of both symbolic, in myself,  
An abstract of the infinite, the whole ?  
No difference 'tween the all and God, but this,  
Active and passive deity ! O man !  
O sacred nature, all divine ! In vain

We seek more light than that we see by. Nought  
 Explaineth death but death, nor life but life ;  
 Whether perpetuate in more brilliant spheres,  
 Or fined and heightened simply into heaven ;  
 Communion with the spirit of infinite life,  
 All present reason, and eternal right,  
 Hailed by each natural mind as God, the good,  
 The wise, the holy, the all-blessing. Hence,  
 God is to man both God unknown and known.  
 The known we love ; but the unknown, although  
 We name it non-existent, still we fear ;  
 And fearing everything, fear nothing most.  
 As 'mid sky-crowning halo, the wan moon,  
 Like an enchantress in her charmed ring.  
 By recusant dæmons scared, her wheel of light  
 Widens, to fend her from wind-striding storms,  
 Threatful of death, in vain ; she knows all ; sees  
 The coming cloud which blots her out of heaven ;  
 So, too, my soul, affrayed, but firm, foreknows  
 The fatal end of all things. Yet, why fear ?  
 Great nature is my mother and my friend ;  
 When God comes down from heaven he dwells with her.  
 Hers is the house of mourning and of mirth ;  
 Feasting and fasting go on side by side ;  
 The song of bridals and the dirge of death,  
 And wail of birth, are aye beneath her roof.  
 She brings her children to their father's knee.  
 These he rebukes, rewards those ; judges all.  
 To all he shows their union with himself,  
 And those he loves best, takes, from time to time,  
 Back to his heavenly hall. Thus, now we know,  
 As 'tween the sun and earth light's spectral bond  
 Proves both like-essenced, concrete of one force  
 Reduplicate, parental ; so we find  
 The elemental thoughts of God and man  
 One ; the same self-constituent truths are ours.  
 Ours is his justice, his our love, though based  
 On grander and more sure foundations ; heaven  
 We share in doing good and willing well ;  
 In blessing, bettering, pardoning others here,  
 His universal throne.

*Guardian Angel.* Go, reign with him.

*Festus.* My confessor art thou, O God, alone.  
 Soon all the shows of nature shall depart,  
 And nought not one with deity, goodness, love,  
 Peace, righteousness, and divine humanity,  
 Yea, nought but the eternal be for aye.  
 He his hand opened and the world was born.  
 He shuts it, and the essential nothingness  
 Embodied, dies its everlasting death,

The infinite conclusion of all things.  
 Open thine arms, O death ! thou fine of woe,  
 And warranty of bliss ! I feel the last  
 Red mountainous remnant of the earth give way.  
 The stars are rushing upwards to the light ;  
 My limbs are light, and liberty is mine.  
 The spirit's infinite purity consumes  
 The sullied soul. Eternal destiny  
 Opens its bright abyss. I am God's !  
*God.* *Man, die !*

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## XL.

The skies, the skies reclaim us. Earth dissolved,  
 God's will prevails now sole. As when o'er vast  
 And shoreward flats at murkiest noon of night,  
 No single element, not high heaven, not earth,  
 Not sea is visible ; one wide searching wind,  
 Sign solitary of life, blows ; blows ; so sweeps  
 Through death's unsubstanced state, God's vital thought.  
 He, as he will, builds, rebuilds ; but to all  
 Create, most just, the soul-world opes, that time  
 Foreclosed, unthought of men, as by some huge  
 Judgment self-wrought of nature, each spirit might make  
 Of evil or good, preponderant choice. Behold  
 The war all souls must wage ; war justified  
 By God, prefixed ; for good fought ; war divine ;  
 War spiritual ; war heavenly :—and because  
 The good forgive the evil, all justice done,  
 God too forgives the good ; and hope weds joy.  
 After inferior nature is subdued  
 The all-evil see confined. Earth's elements  
 Conglobe themselves from chaos, purified.

*The Skies.*

DEITY, ANGELS, ANGEL OF EARTH, LUNIEL, GUARDIAN  
 ANGEL, FESTUS, LUCIFER.

*God.* The age of matter consummates itself.  
 All things that are shall end, save that is mine.  
 As with one world so shall it be with all ;  
 For all false, human, fallible, as towards  
 Creator creature must be, while defect  
 Of separate life their being vitiates, are.  
 Prepare ye not the less for all at last,  
 Grade upon grade of glory, sons of God !

*Angels.* Lord ! we thy souls ministrant but to effect  
 Thy loveable will in all things, live.

*Angel of Earth.* One sphere  
 Yon prophet of perdition, who saw not

In it destroyed, his own discomfiture,  
Space lacks already ; and life the great retreat  
Begins.

*Angels.* Thy hand regenerative, we wait  
Author of all, its place to fill in heaven.

*Angel of Earth.* Earth's annals are accomplished, and  
her tale

Told in the eternal archives, closed for good.  
Behold the ruinous rudiments of a star,  
Once mine ; nor let repose in death ; but since,  
Tortured and torn by hands malevolent. See !  
Hath any seen discription like to this  
Titanic, of an orb's once radiant limbs ?

*Angels.* Despair not thou, the nucleate heart still is,  
Doubtless : and, purified, may yet revive.

*Luniel.* Meanst thou yon mass unsphered, suspense  
'tween heaven's

Calm upward, and these detrimental deeps,  
Down dragging, all destructive, part without  
Mine orbit, part within ; was that once earth ?  
I see no feature, like.

*Angel of Earth.* Ah, yes ! not quite  
Void, yet, of nature's cardinal shapes, each hour  
Tending to wonted settlements, waiting still  
The word compulsory, quickening, to reform ;  
Or, to disperse, permissive, earth it was.

*Luniel.* Seems something wanting to perfection. Lacks  
Force, may be for inception of new worlds ;  
Lacks will ; perchance mislike feels deity towards  
That mould of being.

*Angel of Earth.* I go. Earth ! man, farewell.

*Luniel.* One moment, angel, fold thy wing. Stay yet  
Thy star-flight ; and,—if gained God's leave, while thus  
Colleagued, we parle, we, hosts ubiquitous, soon  
Eradicated, to part, on quests divine,  
From this spot, God's now presence central makes  
To the whole unlimited,—say, we all would know  
Who circling with the whirlwind of our wings  
Yon rude compost, the earth, have, curious, marked,—  
What mean these grouped below us ; that side, fiend,  
And man, this ? this triumphant, that abject ?  
What, too, yon guardian spirit, hovering near ?  
Why silent all in God ? To most it bodes  
Mystery ; nor me can these, consociate here,  
But for the hour, from spheres far off, inform  
Touching events strange, vast, late happed in heaven.  
Speak, friendliest spirit ; for, when thine orb, dispersed  
In fiery fragments, lessening more and more  
By self-resolvent forces from all claim  
Cohæsive, robbed my memory of a form

I could quit  
From sharing all her  
Knew I, but all prede  
The hostile forces, got  
Head in man's spirit c  
For advance perpetual  
By virtue's laws whom  
Through nature, Godw  
Wrenched therefore cu  
To that grand crisis per  
Effect, as earth with he  
Foretold, we have yet t  
'Twas a fair foughten fi  
*Luniel.* Rehearses, o  
Intense of joy in extrem  
Wish one had there been  
*Angel of Earth.*  
Holiest of wars, and best  
'Gainst evil.  
*Phanuel.* O amiable  
As thou beheldst, it may  
Its varying course.  
*Angel of Earth.* Sligh  
O angel of salvation! but  
The heaven-prized spirits  
Nor is it I can tell ye best.  
Couched 'neath yon cloudy  
War-proven, who watch ke  
Heaven's late antagonist, ar  
He, or the fiend, how fared  
For need I show that in yor  
Lies evil o'erthrown it is.

Unless through blind and fluttering instinct, him  
Knowing by alchemy of force divine,  
God's sole will, yet transformable.

*Luniel.* Draw nigh,  
Mortal. And, if I err not, we, ere now,  
Have met, traversed and seen together much.  
Much joy I, that such good conceived hath borne  
In thee, though late enough, fair fruit. And now  
Wouldst me repay for favours passed, or these  
Spirits of amity please; and if of deeds  
Glorious at once and good, thou lovest to tell  
Not less than aid,—speak on! that we, informed,  
With all benevolent souls, that joy which crowns  
And sums celestial life may share whene'er,  
And in what spheres soever, through all space  
Good prospers, good in all because of God.

*Guardian Angel.* Approach, my Festus, spirit beloved,  
nor fear  
Trespass again of evil, nor dread escape  
From God's unmeasured grasp. This conflict passed,  
Know all ye angels, earth's, with time, with life  
Coördinate, and the victory God's, of good.

*Festus.* O heavenly angels, denizens of state  
Celestial, pardon ye, if words of mine,  
Conceptions human failing to translate,  
Fall shorter miserably of minds divine;  
But that ye part, made wise in order due  
Of all things, hear, bright spirits this tale in few:  
And may the all present, but invisible One,  
Inspire me to declare what sole is true!  
Ere yet, and this ye wot of, earth attained  
Her supreme end, man's race,—so gracious grown  
Their instinct of perfection to be gained  
In all things, had, in outward life, so won  
Comfort refined, and moderate plenty, ease,  
Free faith, and learning's temperate luxuries,  
That, in self-flattery, they would whisper, none  
Of souls create, or kinds to be, unknown,  
In social law, weal, polity, might proceed  
Further; scarce 'scaped they angels to become,  
In charity and all knowledge. Underneath  
This outward life of mind was spirit-death,  
Wide spread, not tainting all. Heaven saw the need,—  
Here, prophecy and pagan foresight one,—  
Of a great purifying strife, the doom  
Self-wrought, of woe or bliss, from good or ill  
Practised by fallible souls but free, wherein  
God's aims they might adopt, or side with sin:  
And conscience so with fate, one end fulfil.  
Earth's final scenes avails not now to unroll;

... that souls  
friends

Or foes, self-judged ; &  
Those heavenwards, as  
To all their fellow spir  
And if to wisdom's god  
Or ignorance dark and  
I had passed then throu  
Like to a flower which  
Seemed with all force fr  
Of life-worlds trembling  
I looked around ; and th  
Loomed 'neath my feet a  
The masque impenetrable  
Yet to my spiritual sense  
First conscious, nature kn  
Save that the elements m  
Somewhat ; incongruous ;  
Not friends, not foes, but  
Unfixed, unfinished, as th  
Their passed life over agai  
Of orderly sequence blank  
Of unrecognizant mind ; to  
Thus, then the prospect sto  
Showed spread far out befo  
Where solitude, if generabl  
To life, might have presume  
When, suddenly, on either I  
And marvellously, as thoug  
Ere the whole eye were of t  
A world in arms, though mi  
Souls, these, humane, which  
w

That good should master ill ; heaven's hoped for life  
Mere death outworth ; God's peace, all creatural strife.  
For every soul, unwittingly in the passed  
Self-quit or self-condemned,—no proofless plea  
Of faith in carnal gods, no unbased trust  
To magical words or symbols in the eye  
'Vailing, of God the Father, kind as just  
Towards all his children, he uplifting none  
At cost of others ; asking not of one  
More than his strength or light could owe ; this last  
Of all earth's human generations, he  
Mildliest of all, as cut off timelessly,  
Would treat. His ways how holy, and how fair !  
Quick as by passion's step, that vast array,—  
By trumpets silver or brazen, which each one told  
Inly, beneath what pennons to repair,  
That either side their visible tongues unrolled,  
Divided, sought its side and took its way.  
Soon, distant hills gleamed with long ranks of foes,  
Illimitable, as sunset lines which bar  
Eve's skies, or sphere broad belted, as for war,  
Eager to outlap or with the opponent close :  
Each gorged horizon tremulous with the crowds,  
O'er plain and mount self-urged like armed clouds.  
On either side, two eminences I viewed,  
Tall, ominous, like twin monsters on the plain,  
Fallen brooding. Each vast mound, of arms was reared  
Carnal and spiritual mingled ; bright appeared  
Those, with a sickly polish which by use  
Wears off ; by use, a dazzling hue these gain,  
Intensitive, that of dulness dares accuse  
The glareful lightnings earth midst all her path  
Fronts : and 'tween these the ghostly multitude  
By brotherly love commoved, or scorn, which hath  
With hell fell concert, each, his arms to choose,  
Passed and repassed. Whiles marked I, unconcerned,  
The gathering tempest rolling down the hills,  
And storm of men their hurricane way that burned  
Before them ; and though, time now passed, averse  
From war, and deeming it earth's crowning curse,  
Her worst and least defensible of all ills,  
Yet now it sacred seemed : and, strange fatality !  
Who should be vanquished, or who victor, while  
My course and choice awaiting to decide,  
Borne in, it seemed, upon me as a tide  
O'erwrothed, that all the blood-feuds which defile  
Earth's annals, were but mocks of this reality,  
Their end, their antitype ; yet, so secure  
My trust in good passed all things framed to endure,  
No fear my heart from steadiest state might lure ;

Nor mote I marvel more what should create  
 Such mighty armaments, should thus draw forth  
 Those, as of southern fire-gloom born, with hate  
 Hot, these, as storms of splendour from the north  
 Issuant, in long keen lines o'er half the earth,  
 When I beheld in these commilitant bands  
 Men of all faiths, all tongues, all strains, all lands,  
 All names; on that side all co-variants massed  
 Votaries of error, falsehood, mystery, each  
 Leagued 'gainst the faith on this, earth's first, earth's last;  
 Held by the wise of every age and speech;  
 Which saints sing, angels celebrate and teach,  
 God's unity, and his love; man's deathless soul  
 Judged with just mercy; so that he, the whole,  
 Who made, made pure, will ultimately ally  
 With him. Not long stood dallying with suspense.  
 I, who had 'whither,' alway paired with 'whence,'  
 While pondering on man's end, as source, like high;—  
 When, hark! from form invisible, but close by,  
 An angel voice—

*Guardian Angel.* 'Twas I, dear Festus, I,  
 Thy soul-ward!

*Festus.* Thou!—cried, 'Arm, for thy defence;  
 The idolaters, thy foes, and truth's, appear;  
 And all the hosts of evildom, since life  
 Began, revived to wage earth's deadliest strife.'  
 And, in a moment, ere the anxious eye  
 Could glance around, a shadowy hand was near;  
 Dight me in armour; gave a glittering brand  
 Which, lurid as the flash tempestuous heaven  
 Hurls to sea, queller of cloud-sundering levin,—  
 Shook forth its permanent lightnings in mine hand;  
 Soul-trenchant; wrought of star-steel which endures,—  
 Even as of old the mystic meteor sword,  
 By nomad Scythian idolwise adored,—  
 No sheath; its ingrained fire all cloak combures  
 Disdainful; gave this spiky shield; this spear,  
 Floweret of fight, of war's keen crop bright ear:  
 Then, vanished visibly. I wordless stand,  
 Waiting the approach of some one to dispel  
 The mist of doubt upon my spirit that fell.  
 While thus I stood expectant, from on high  
 You angel came,—oh! can I ever tell  
 His guardian love?—and touching thrice mine eye,  
 With force endowed it prism-wise, whereby  
 All motives to themselves men justify  
 As stimulating their acts, it could disblend,  
 Even to their innate elements which the soul,  
 With either host, according to their end  
 Coördinated, and lawed to sin's control,

Or virtue's. Thus apprised, I straightways view,  
 Who served false gods, if but with piety, drew  
 Toward us ; who homaged even the sole and true,  
 As hypocrites, sought the enemy ; and so knew,  
 God just, self-doomed all. There, with those, I eyed  
 All selfish passions, envy, avarice, hate,  
 Impiety and impurity close allied,  
 Sloth, wrath, intemperance, cruelty and false pride,  
 Within the enemy's breast self-generate,  
 Each several vice the bad have deified  
 Corrupting inwardly ; each contagious side  
 To his neighbour's heart infecting. Here, elate,  
 The pure determining reasons when I saw,  
 The love of God, of mercy, virtue's law,  
 Truth, wisdom and their friends impersonate,  
 Though fewer than the foe, of loftier state,  
 I, as by rational gravitation, sped  
 Swift towards the array of light, and made mine own  
 The cause they served. No sooner joined, than head  
 Stood I, meseemed, o'er all, leave asked of none,  
 Nor of sway wishful : for no longer fired  
 With love of place pre-eminent as desired  
 Erstwhile, nathless these ends my seekers sought  
 Prizing, ends virtue sanctioned, wisdom loved,  
 To save from error's doom, give heaven its aught,  
 Predestined ; capture in pure mercy ; win  
 The soul self-blinded to the effects of sin  
 Godwards ; ends worthy of him, by him approved ;  
 And truth's friends :—all resistlessly concurred  
 My soul to attract. Their foemen, rebels vile  
 Showed, who his rule spurned, scorned his power and word ;  
 Strove aye his works to depreciate, defile ;  
 Colleagued to impair the just ; to impugn the true ;  
 To blacken every fault thought had but blurred :—  
 To vaunt their arms could all the Gods subdue,  
 Or chase them out of heaven,—an atheist crew,  
 And disbeliefful host,—and their seats give  
 To creatural born pretenders, fortune, chance ;  
 Developed force, wed atoms with the expanse ;  
 To mere material powers that be, not live ;  
 All godliest truths ignored ;—such, these who fought—  
 So learned I, from the spiritual inview given  
 Mine eye,—for falsehood, and, for God, would nought.  
 And now, nor time for more served ; for, self-massed,  
 With treacherous speed, and ranked, their lines as driven  
 By inward tempests, on, the foe came fast ;  
 From every eye-ball rage and malice gleamed ;  
 Like burning floods along the plain they passed.  
 High on their ensigns strange devices beamed  
 Forbidden, of blackest magic scrolled in light

Of vicious glamour; spells of murderous might;  
And weapons weird, with mottoes base bedight,  
Such as around the lips of Circe's bowl,  
Or on siren's tongues suffice to slay the soul;  
Here, as though stolen from the heraldry of hell,  
On many a shield, 'eternal death,' imblazed;  
Here, the illumined lie, 'no God!' we gazed,  
Imbannered. Still no terror us befell.  
But as when earth's forceful orb, ancient of night,  
Rolling serene on her foreshoothened way,  
Some dimly insultant shower of meteor light  
Breasts listless, undeflect; so our array  
Dense, but with crush of splendours, all their charge  
Hurled on us, each receives, contemns at large;  
So certain seem we of our ultimate day.  
But not too wisely this, nor then. Still on,  
On sweeping still, with shouts and cursings dire,  
Their brows as brass, their squadrons swift as storm  
When arrowy lightnings nature's face deform;  
Before them darkness, and behind them fire,  
They, hosted, rushed; and as a sea its banks  
Strikes foaming, thundering, smote our faithful ranks.  
Then closed the armies. Cloud 'gainst cloud when thrown  
By adverse winds, first straggles into thin strife  
From different levels, till, storm-crushed in one,  
Darkness 'mid darkness wedged, with horrors rife,  
The gloomy concave no distinction shows;  
So blended in one vast intricate fray,  
These, bellowing, called destruction on their foes,  
And with a terrible onset nought could stay,  
Left havoc scarcely room his arm to play.  
From our own hearts unspoken prayers arose;  
And praise of God who the beginnings knows  
Of all things from the end; and to defeat  
Ever subjects, at first, the cause he hath chose.  
Reeled earth beneath the madness of the shock;  
The mountains smoked; the hills broke from their seat;  
Their banks streams leaped; groans burst from hardest rock:  
The seas convulsed against their barriers beat;  
The sun, like one who, fear-struck, drops his hands,  
Withdraws his beams, and all astonished stands,  
Rayless; re-waked, lifts her red torch the moon,  
Lest all should yet be lost in total night.  
The trembling stars, unchecked by fervid noon,  
Rush from their bowers, with censers burning bright;  
Even hell was moved, and weltering where he lay,  
A howl of joy sent forth commingled with dismay.  
Scarce was a pause bethought of, either side,  
And fiercelier e'er the war waxed, for betide  
What might of conflict or conquest, ere long

The sun ; all saw, must set ;—incentive strong  
 With us to fight so as to win, who light  
 Even as God's shadow love ; to them, too, night  
 Who worship as the friend of fraud. Now, 'mong  
 The traitor ranks whose leaders we had guessed  
 Nowise, nor knew what griefs their manifest  
 Of war set forth,—a chief had late appeared,  
 Of towering stature, and of visage fell,  
 Who in his hand a dreadful weapon reared  
 Macelike, entwined with serpents, seed of hell ;  
 While round his neck a burnished shield its blaze  
 Far o'er the war-field flashed with blinding rays.  
 Quailed all the faithful 'neath the impending might  
 Of this impersonate awe ; a withering spell  
 Bode in his eyes that struck with deathly blight  
 Men's souls ; scarce 'scaping one, a fatal daze  
 Who on those wide-scanning orbs but paused to gaze.  
 As when, through sheaf-piled fields, a ball of fire,  
 Elanced from cloud electric, speeds its way,  
 Scorching and wasting with unwavering ire,  
 Each feeble obstacle nought but surer prey ;  
 So, through ranks prostrated, the eye might trace  
 His devastations by a trenched tract  
 Of souls slain seemingly ; and still his pace,  
 Precipitate as a lava cataract,  
 Death-fraught, he urged ; now, as he nearlier drew,  
 Amazed, I gazed ; for well that form I knew ;  
 And, hailing, would have stayed ; in vain ; for aye  
 The desolation round him graver grew.  
 His step, his mien alas ! I could but know,  
 His ominous air ; and from his eye's deep glow,  
 Pulsant, requickening like to ember fanned  
 By the owlet's wing, all sequent things in hand  
 My soul conceives, undeeded, done, foreplanned.  
 'Hold, spirit ;' I cried ; grant all thy doomed array  
 One moment's truce, and these just proffers weigh.  
 God willeth not the death ye seek this day ;  
 But that ye live. Submit yourselves to heaven,  
 Quit evil, and all sin's false pretence eschew ;  
 Repent, believe, be good and be forgiven.  
 'Tis God's will.' 'Art thou,' quoth the fiend, 'the man  
 I stood by, late ?' 'I am,' I said. 'And can  
 These souls, think'st thou, who live beyond the grave,  
 Freed from death's law, who now destruction brave,  
 To other will subject them than their own ?  
 Speak, all ye hosts !' 'We serve ourselves alone' ;  
 Broke in low thunders from those lurid lines,  
 Shadowy. 'Accept thy answer, nor again  
 Obstruct,' the demon said, 'with project vain,  
 Our course.'—Grieved, scarce surprised, retain

All ours, perseverant, one sublime consent,  
One fixed resolve ; through all our columns shines  
On every face the firm but sweet intent  
To prove, by love's resistless argument  
God kind as just ; and how sin's worst endeavour  
Being finite, must at last fail all to outbrave  
His boundless goodness which, perforce, for ever  
Endures ; not he more prone to love than save  
The souls he hath made. This too we let them hear  
By herald's lips : and vowed to persevere  
While life remained. Like hardly obstinate, they,  
Motive and end impugned, word sent to say  
No God they knew ; nor, if they won their way  
O'er us, should we great nature's mysteries  
Traduce, and live. Forewarned by taunts like these  
We nerve ourselves once more to war, and strain  
Our strength to o'erthrow the mountainous juggleries  
They forge against us. Strange and monstrous shows  
Of all imaginary ills, portents,  
Such only as inventive madness knows,  
Forbye their own, of hideous armaments  
O'erhead in air ; seemed even to join the fray  
The elements bodily ; and whilst fieriest rain  
And winds sulphureous storms contrariant threw  
'Gainst our firm-footed forces, earth and main  
By turns retaliating dismay, now drew  
Hither, the fight, now thither. Fixed retain  
Both hosts the intent, as yet, the day to gain.  
As when some ocean-flood to circumvent  
An island obstacle, its strifeful tides,  
Though to collide at last doomed, first, divides,  
This polewards, linewards that, while each intent  
On its own course, half with its rival's blent,  
Conscious not yet of check, nor rise nor fall  
Brooks, till at last, one turbulent level all  
In vast libration holds ;—so we this war  
And strenuous æquipoise of discontent  
Wage, doubt-crowned, nor, who victors know thus far.  
We most had suffered ; ours, most wounded, showed.  
Yet still meseemed we had gained the ground where stood  
Their streamy standards first ; and gained for good.  
But as when athwart some broad far-stretching beach  
The seaward wind ascendant, hour by hour,  
With huge and inexhaustible greed of death,  
Sweep sand-clouds suicidal, mad to reach  
The invasive waves white plumed who at every breath  
A land born levy engulph, insatiate ;—so  
Like endless, fruitless like, this strife of power  
With power, to feud eternal threats to grow ;  
As though even fate prevaricated. Again

From point to point the rebel chieftains flew  
And, passing, on us faithful, looks oft threw  
Of proud contempt, to mark the swathes of slain ;  
So seemed our vanquished to their treacherous view.  
In splendid mien and lofty port they shone,  
Dazzling the eye ; and as from out the mass,  
They sudden broke, and then were lost anon,  
Like stars they showed, when tempests break and pass  
In quivering fragments of dark clouds away,  
Casting around a brief but baleful ray.  
The faithful checked, a moment, now resumed  
Hotlier the fight ; and though the rebel arms  
Bright bannered, far and wide, the field illumed,  
In guise triumphant, brooked no base alarms.  
No foot now flinched ; no hand now failed ; no heart  
Grew faint, of those who filled, still firm, our throng,  
Of sacred ranks ; each soul, inspired, his part  
Heaven-named, performed, in zeal and reason strong ;  
For reason strengthened every hand that fought  
That day for faith. How tense the strain was ours  
One moment proved extatic, when, faith-brought ;  
Truth, virtue, 'like their cause, their ends, their powers,  
Our camp seek ; stay ; and midst our vaunt-guard bide ;  
In panoply of proof, with hosts allied,  
Givers of victory ; choosers they of all  
Whose choice is life eternal ; by our ranks  
Hailed rapturously, and their pure aid with thanks ;  
Maids of immortal sanctity, we forestal  
Their triumph ; and regard half-deified ;—  
Invincible, they at least. By our content,  
So audibly voiced, the foe at last alarmed,  
And at such access of high powers, so armed,  
To madness wrought, and upon nought less bent  
Than us to at once annihilate, formed behind  
Each wing, fresh myriads massed ; and passion-blind  
Our lines unmoved assail ; till, flagging they,  
We, our main strength reserved, renew the affray :  
Impatient, dreadless, on the enemy rush,  
And 'neath our might, in turn, their legions crush.  
As when 'neath spring's bright sun, clouds broken fly  
Before the impulsive wind, and, through the sky  
Routed, as by rejoicing gusts of light,  
Pass, shamed and dulled, so these their fated flight,  
Beneath our swift assaults, speed sullenly.  
Exultant we pursue our conquests ; yield  
They seem to do on all sides ; everywhere  
We spread our terror ; overrun the field ;  
Surrender some ; some clamour to be led  
'Gainst their late friends ;—too weary we, instead,  
These guard for later discipline ;—but the snare

'Tis aid that's lost, 'tis a visible retreat,  
Retreat, reframe yourselves.' As  
They 'scape the torments of remembrance  
And seek circuitously their peers :  
When lo ! their backs scarce turne  
As suddenly. But the enemy boa  
Of least success, thought even to co  
Our vantage late, by aids that coul  
Suborned of all the powers unjust  
Sin, superstition, passion, vice, hat  
He called, and hell's delusions thro  
Phantoms and fiendish spectres, su  
Preposterous, on the horizon long :  
Where lies, cloud-stifled, on his go  
The tyrant sun ; shapes, that from  
Distort themselves fanatically, and  
Their misconceived proportions eve  
They draw, ere throes of self-dissol  
Scatter o'er space their writhing lin  
And to distract our spirits, these sh  
Foul, threatening, that on high seas  
Below by force, we might less migh  
Our arms, this wise enfeebled ;—arn  
Quailed, or to phalanx'd host, or in  
Not impious force, not ghastliest wi  
Prevailed. The tempest of enchant  
Calm, we resumed our freer, safer g  
Defend, and for reward brief respite  
'Hear, fellow-warriors,' soon I crie  
Behoves us to recruit our strength :  
'Tis action, and its sole end, fair co  
Heaven of our arms demands ; 'twe  
To stand not ever and instantly on :

Not daring longer openly to engage  
Our conquering standards, they for parle applied ;  
But parley served not ; for we, loyal, pressed  
Now keenly on, and all their wiles defied ;  
More traitorous than we knew them yet untried.  
As vulture trapped our enemy found too late,  
Strife nor submission freed from fore-fixed fate,  
Of them unthought ; of us, yet unconfessed.  
Anon, our faithful pause ; for now the foe  
Desperate, turned 'gainst each other, nor expressed  
One plan, but for their Head hate sole possessed ;  
Whose errors grossest ignorance seemed to show  
And whose misfeats all ills to premonstrate ;—  
Less seriously concerned our force to wreck  
They, than their own league ;—crazed ! More potent check,  
No more sufficing punishment could know,  
'Twas plain, the adversary. Blow now 'gainst blow  
Answering no more from ours, war lulled. While thus  
In separate commonalties resolved, and while  
By open conflict or by scarce hidden guile,  
Each thwarting other, gradually they wound  
Their battle from off this world-contested ground,  
As though some likelier schemes to rediscuss.  
Their leader, prompt to prove his weight in war,  
To every foe, or open or envious,  
In face of all his gleamy squadrons round,  
Stood, as in summer's dawn the morning star  
Is wont, in the young orient to protect  
Night's astral troops, retreating nigh and far  
Into heaven's fastnesses, ere o'ermastering light  
All rout ; and seems, while any shadows are,  
With his sole tutelar spear, day's whole effect  
To outworth ; such craft of bravery in sight  
Of our chafed legions, haughtily dared deploy  
Their chief, who would our hopes, God's ends, destroy.  
Yet seize we not the moment to embroil  
Our arms afresh ; but pause from battailous toil.  
For now day dimmed, though long seemed dark delayed ;  
And hills, themselves but shadowy, shadows made.  
Now, set the sun ; but who of all forecast  
That sunset he beheld was nature's last ?  
Man's little day, foreweighted on the beam  
Of God's eternal poise, time's day supreme,  
Closed now for aye on that ætherial field ;  
And all to night primæval looked to yield ;  
That strife of strengths supernal, once of old,  
Time's twilight, and the god-war, seer foretold ;  
That contest so to conquest near, as deemed,  
Our hosts, thus ended, worse than doubtful seemed,  
In pardonable distrust ; and some forebode,

Swells into life, y wreathe the  
List for one note, one chord,  
His scheme no part of, animates  
Tis fixed ; the friendly powers  
Their columns thickening 'neat  
Yet not such secret guile was t  
But Virtue,—who an eminence  
Had conquered, whence she mi  
All hostile evildom,—she, aye  
Forewarned us ; nay, presentie  
From ominous silence what du  
And thence what proximate pe  
As therefore, when, times past  
The electric harpstrings hummi  
With latent lightning charged,  
Imperial, peace, war, or loved  
In viewless miracle flashed o'er  
By land, by sea, while one coul  
So through our serried squares  
Presignalled by the rise of time  
From the pure power—' The fo  
Assault. Be equal all, anear, a  
Nor doubt the event, God's cha  
And soon, in full extent of all  
On us they advance, wide-horn  
Curved crescent-wise, shuts in  
Though cheered by wavelets br  
A spell to check their enemies'  
So we the impending foe abide,  
With a shock they burst upon  
Rampant in air, hail-fraught, o  
'Tween the still step of its aerie  
From this to that horizon, and

Save their born masters. We, our foes irate,  
Instinctive foes, by birth these, those by fate,  
By reason more, but all as foes self-classed,  
Fight leniently; nor strive to exterminate,  
So much as to chastise and teach. Vain care!  
Roused by one wide tempestuous thunder-blast,  
Wild brief of all the discordry of war,  
They bore down on us, with the sickening sweep  
Of an eclipse's wing, which, shadowy, chilled  
To its fiery heart, the sphere, and the storm stilled  
Of foregone strife; down on us, in the deep  
The murk, unmorrowing, darkness, as it seemed;  
Cleared all mid spatial checks; closed for the fray;  
Singled every soul his man, as who should say  
Each spirit hath sworn its separate sheaf to reap  
From that stupendous tilth, fate's harvest field,  
Where all the vanquished, to perdition sealed,  
Sank down, to horrible ruin unrepealed  
Unmatched; or so they opined. Not one but dreamed  
Of worsting us by truculent rage, or sheer  
O'erbearingness; nor knew their doom how near.  
Through all their vast platoons, as lightning ploughs  
Black storm-clouds, pierce we; all our forces rouse  
In flying raids their wings clip, and attack.  
Lighter, their masses dense and dazed; drive back  
To where their main reserves, not yet too late  
For one grand stroke, in ignorance stand of fate.  
We pause. They form; charge; but not all the weight  
Their force disorderly could accumulate,  
Nor vehement fury gave them, our array  
Indented permanently. At this, abashed,  
As one who by sheer selfwill hath lost his way,  
Our rebels round them glared with dumb dismay,  
Like to a storm whose last faint lightnings flashed  
Soundless, ere yet it ceased, mid heaven's blithe vault,  
In impotent vapourings. We, meanwhile, who rest,  
With one sole resolute purpose prepossessed,  
Such thankful tears shed, each on other's breast,  
As one life hazarding 'gainst some grim assault  
Of the elements, and still extant, sternly glad  
Despite the escape from judgment lately had,  
To know his vital virtue not at fault,  
Nor all his lifelong training at last vain,  
Who feels that not to have lost is all to gain:  
Now, like elate, from rank to rank we tossed,—  
As waves the columned shadow of the sun,  
From this to that spray-crested, ever lost  
In rearward depths, fresh framed in front,—the smile  
Self-luminous of success, so dearly won,  
So scarcely, that disdainful of all wile,

All force, presumptuous, I at length began  
To accredit fate with faith's too facile plan,  
And dream all might to one sole duel send  
This battlefield of good and evil man.  
How act? 'Stand forth, fell foe; man's, God's,' I cried,  
'Who dost to both all ill, dost more intend.  
Thy præpotence dread not I; but fortified  
Built up and towered in spirit by strength divine,  
I wait to seal this woe, thine end or mine,  
With mine all these!' As glides a cloud from far,  
Lone scout of tempests, towards some paly star,  
Pale, not appalled, in silence one may feel  
Perfusive even to fainting, ere it rend  
Its heart in fiery thunders, so reveal  
Our foe storm-massed 'gainst us, their mighty head,  
Towards me advancing on slow foot;—but ere  
That occultation, crowds on either hand  
Between us rush, and each to his command  
Deliberately returned, reform instead  
Their front, their lines redress. Fell now from heaven,  
As I the event sought of this strife in prayer,  
These words, space-sundering; 'To nought made is given  
This war to end, but to God sole. Persever  
Ye righteous souls. Ye win, if late, win ever.'  
Heart warm with joy I heard. To us who know  
We no defection have to mourn, to show,—  
With growth of disciplined forces everywhere,  
No breast but glows recuperative, no arm  
But touched one moment by the sacred charm  
Of that soul-medicine, he, within his tent  
The great Physician, gives to all who will;  
To us, of strength vouchsafed proud, ardent, still,  
As warriors of the light to fight 'gainst ill,  
Scarce other plan than this seemed left, untried,  
God's mind, diffused abroad in us, our guide,  
The enemy now to charge in chief; and while  
Their force by ours outmastering, force and guile  
Alike crushed, bind, in love's constraining bands;  
For in our camp was store of griefless chains  
Unloosenable, which nought, not pride withstands,  
Of golden patience wrought and purest pains,—  
Nor slay, but relegate solely to God's hands.  
This vow by each partook, and ministered  
Mutually, as though by comforting wine and bread,  
Refreshed, each heaven-devote battalion stands;  
One moment pray we silently; then form;  
Then forward, by one impulse, like a storm.  
But oh! a storm of tenderness and fear  
For them, not of them, even as streams o'erbear,  
But not uproot, the sedgy crop they hold;

Thus irresistibly we outswEEP, enfold,  
Thus, peace-inspired, we war; pass hope; each hand  
Mightier than aught known evil might gainstand,  
Evil, cloud-lived. Boots not to tell how last  
O'erthrown, cowed, conquered, 'neath our yoke they passed,  
Nor how, heaven therefor thanked, we testified  
Our boundless joy. But as the earth-conquering tide,—  
Who many a green and purple braid, at large,  
Twist gorgeously in trebly tinted strand,  
Like desert sanctuary's symbolic band,  
Casts careless on the shore's wide shining marge;  
With giant globelets gemmed of rainbow foam,  
Seed of the sea, whence beauty first was born;—  
A mass ingarlanded of jewelled weeds;  
His prostrate foe thus decked in divine scorn  
Of strength, strength sterner had o'erborne;—so we  
All honours quartering with the enemy,  
Nor longer counting possible strife to come,  
Our vanquished load with spoil of generous deeds;  
Drive, jubilant, all our glittering triumph home,  
With song, and loud conclaim of victory.  
Thus warred, thus win we. Time shall sink in night  
But never shall from memory pass the sight  
Transcendant, when the foe their sign first gave  
Of full submission. Like the smile of light,  
The silent lightning of the moonlipped wave,  
Which, lengthening gradual, parts now, now extends;  
Beams from far points at once, there central breaks;  
Here from the midst its flight extremeward takes;  
Then, sudden ceased, revives; revives, nor ever ends;—  
Gleamed forth the inexhaustible joy, now ours  
Through all our dazzling lines. There are, meanwhile,  
With our changed adversaries, no longer powers  
Of ill, who fain with fate would reconcile  
Their late discomfited chief. He, too, in mien  
By sudden sorcery changed, both hosts between,  
On wing malefic hung, as, poised o'er sands,  
Shadowy, a black and jagged cloud will lie,  
Monstrous and solitary. Too fierce to fly  
But, braving doom, with uplift impious hands  
Clenched, clubbed with threats, he glowered upon the sky,  
The great infortune of the universe;  
All winding, man and God, in one unuttered curse.  
'O thou All-good!' I cried, 'to yon dark power,  
Malevolent, in the air, betwixt thy throne  
And us, our cause arraigning in thine own,  
Be thy miraculous might, conversive, shown,  
And all thy mercy usward, this dread hour;  
Or show us how our foe to annihilate.'  
Presumptuous, thus, impatient, if I prayed

Yet not unacceptably all, as fate  
 To the world reveals. For lo ! all life create,  
 As warrior's breast of arrowy bolt relieved  
 Flesh racking,—groaned with joy, as down he fell,—  
 God's passive hand withdrawn, without whose aid  
 Things nathless evil, were all of force bereaved,—  
 With thunderous shock, reverberant even in hell,  
 The spirit, disrealmed, of ill ; there stirless laid.  
 All being seemed now aswound, and smitten as dumb.  
 Grew a presage in every breast of some  
 Solemn and saintly act of God to come.  
 As when, at eve, some cloud, which long hath lain  
 The oppression of the heavens, and of a realm  
 The terror,—fled,—redeemed from nameless fear,  
 Anarchal, of earth-quakings, and the train  
 Of ills conflagrant, which by larcenous wile  
 By chance, by lightning, oft whole states o'erwhelm ;—  
 Make glad the citizens, seeing, slow, appear  
 In air, a pearly calm, as though of sphere  
 Happier than theirs ; the young moon's maiden smile  
 Lands, sullen late, lights up ; the tranquil main  
 Rests to its roots ;—so we, war gone, heaven's peace,  
 Coheir of bliss, and all their vast release,  
 Welcome. The day of God, to us the day  
 Of joy, to theirs destined of dire dismay,  
 Dawned o'er our heads ; the sun of justice, sphere  
 Of righteousness, no setting more to fear,  
 Beamed manwards ; and his seat assumed for aye.  
 All now the end of ends knew nigh ; and lo !  
 Each eye intent on heaven's aspect, there shone  
 Instant, on light's enlarging horizon,  
 As crystallised by the spirit which round us blew  
 Perfect, in symmetry divine to view  
 A long slim cloudlet, like to a golden bow  
 Knapped just i' the midst ; its loose and listless chord  
 Tangled about it. Thus showed God the Lord  
 That fight was finished ; good's great victory won ;  
 Earth's war of spiritual light and darkness done ;  
 The strife of ages closed. Then all the sun  
 Helped us to note our foemen's piteous state,  
 And know thereby our victory half achieved  
 Onely, while charity failed to renovate  
 With hope those fallen ; with faith those sin-deceived ;  
 With trust in God those erst who misbelieved.  
 These humbled now, submissive, silent, gave  
 Ruth first its power to amend, grace, hope to save ;  
 Us, spirit to help that ardent multitude  
 'Gainst ours so lately arrayed, but whom we viewed  
 Now, burying out of sight, in one deep grave,  
 Their carnal arms, ashamed. Disharnessed, nude

They watched their banners burn. Then first we saw,  
Glancing on our own arms, each arm a law  
Of God, each weapon a virtue; shield and glaive  
A truth divine, strong to subdue or save;  
Wrought of God's hand, God's art! without a flaw;  
Forged in heaven's fire; impenetrable, alike,  
This, faith to guard; by reason, that, to strike.  
While myriads thus their arms laid down, subdued  
By kindness, patience, grace, love, mansuetude;  
All human excellences and God's combined;  
And while truth, wisdom, virtue all things viewed  
Approvingly, and helped one mighty mind  
From all to mould, some few start out, of kind  
Indomitable, and for meet punishment,  
Conform to holy reason's just intent,  
And his, divine, reserved,—who from the age  
Initial of the world, life's every stage  
Hath loved to advance and sought to ameliorate.  
We, these things knowing, and with the great effect  
Secured, well pleased, thanks first to God direct;—  
Which done, in every wound we pour the balm  
Of heavenly all-heal; every conscience calm  
With mercy's anodyne; strengthen every mind  
With just belief of strife man's vital need  
By one all wise, who good and ill so twined  
With freedom, that his fate man rules,—decreed  
Until to nature's war heaven's peace succeed;  
And God's pure truth triumphant prove the intent  
He, world-wise providence, from the first hath planned,  
That good, 'gainst ill, in free arbitrement  
Of spirit, fair fought, should final conqueror stand;  
Reason, faith serving, sin and self command;  
And bale and bliss, life's vast contrariant whole,  
One cause confess, one universal soul.  
Now all earth's old distinctions ceased; sea, land  
Lapsing into their primal essence grew  
Ætherial, and the wind, world-warning, threw—  
As wretched seer who some state-ruinous ill  
Foretelling, helps his woeful weird fulfil,  
The popular mind distraught by such sad skill,—  
Into each dying gust, as breathed of fate,  
Force, our mixed tribes once more to segregate;  
Soul winnowing far from soul. These banned,—the word  
Compellant, sternly mild, in fatherly tone  
Said, as by one who willed to amend their state,  
Not utterly ruined nor all reprobate,  
Who favoured error, sin, the imperfect,—heard  
Wistful: not ignorant how to reatone  
With God the spirit, and knowing so concurred  
In their just doom; knew, all the long career

Of pains abstersive, pains heaven's nether sphere  
 Opes aye to all, ere filled the soul's great year  
 Before them; knew their kind remedial end  
 Necessitated; and went. As one by one  
 Like rags of darkness from night's mantle riven,  
 Eve's tempest slackened, clouds, the face of heaven  
 Long shadowingly deform, loath to be gone;  
 But all at last mass up the horizon,  
 So they: their chief in bonds, once seeming friend,  
 Prey of my falchion, spoil now of this spear,  
 Out-taken; he, still reserved for judgment here:—  
 God's will so said. Meanwhile we, warned, attend  
 A further sign; and instantly 'twas given;  
 A fire-voice; gathering gradual out of heaven,  
 Sense hallowing, mind transfiguring, round us came;  
 A voice; as when within some homely shrine  
 Our God comes down in answer to his name  
 Invoked, and with a wordlessness divine  
 Holds converse inmost; and us, who had striven  
 Through this soul conflict, calling, straight we know,—  
 As lived things dead, touched, erst, by prophet's rod,  
 In us the spirit regenerant's deathless glow;  
 A fire, that all with purifying zest  
 Before it, burned; consuming, midst our breast  
 Nature's whole evil; and this fire was God.  
 I, then:—'As reelfet, long from parent shore  
 Orphaned, that save at hollowest ebb of all  
 Year-tides, peers not the savage surges o'er,  
 Nor airs her pearl and coral, childish store,  
 I' the golden light; nor ever,—while befall  
 Others, such less joys oft,—rejoins, by chance  
 Her kindred lands; gift compensative none  
 Desiring for life-long suppression more  
 Than this, eternized to her,—the sun's glance;  
 So, from time's deeps emergent, and the flood  
 Refluous, of life and death, my soul, in thine,  
 O God! sole spirit of universal good,  
 Oned with all blessed, the unnumbered multitude;  
 Immortal, mystic, militant, and divine,  
 Would in thine eye-light bask, thy governance.'  
 No after sound nor sign. The renovate sphere  
 Good thus world victor, evil o'ertbrown,—us, here  
 Biding God's ends, see, angels! Dost not fear  
 Fiend! late my foe, fate's future, deadlier pass?  
*Lucifer.* Have not I triumphed o'er the world that was?  
*God.* Prince of the powers of air, thy doom is nigh.  
 The prison and place of spirits shall be for thee  
 As for all these guilt 'complices thine, thou hast wronged  
 For a time one proper mansion: they in pain  
 Emendative: thou, evil!

*Lucifer.* And what if I  
Heart-hardened, still endure? While lasts the world,  
Thou mayst restrain, confine; not make to cease.

*God.* Him lead ye angels into Hades, there  
To await my will while the world's sabbath lasts.  
These souls elect, self purified, fore-called  
Who die not, nor, who through my favour, lose  
Unconscious, by death's intermediate sleep,  
Nor expiative amercement, joy in me,  
Who, righteous souls of all earth's epochs passed,  
All faiths, all grades of mind, here from the tomb  
First-born, the truth, in heaven once gosselled, prove;  
That faith should conquer misbelief, the good  
All ill subject, virtue all sin; and these  
Led by one sampling soul, forechosen of love,  
First fruits of life celestial which their breast  
Fills,—shall the earth, now renovated, indwell.

*Angels.* Be it Lord as thou dost will, with us, with all.

*God.* Angel of earth, and thou bright Phanuel, sole  
In the infinite presence, visible of thyself,  
And you, ye astral souls, who, latewhile, here,  
Earth's end, as rise, saw, and this unfixed mean  
Of seeming chaos; who still animate, guide,  
Or train the orblets to your genial care  
Consigned, and in your charge as in my love  
Happy, know, all, if, sumless times now gone  
Earth's mountainous frame to upbuild, from central base,  
To airiest battlement once I willed, 'twas not  
Necessity clogged my hands, nor forced compute  
Of infinite atomies; no, my power as choice  
Untrammelled, see, angel of starry earth,  
My special promise once in heaven's records  
Enrolled, shall be fulfilled. While time beholds  
Orbs vaster, scattered into particles, dim  
The surface of eternity's flood, conjoin  
The casual meteor, or for ages drift  
Through space extenuate, to minutest motes  
Dissolved, even lucent dust, and radiant mist,  
Prime manifest of the invisible essence, thine,  
Regathering all its elements shall again  
Brighten the vital air, fierily refined.  
Lo! earth shall live again and, with her sons,  
Have resurrection to a brighter being;  
And wakening like a bride, or like a morning,  
With a long blush of love, to a new life,  
Another race of souls shall rule in her,  
Creatures all loving, beautiful and holy;  
Such,—see them!—as, evil quelled, and justice wrought,  
Have vanquished bound and trampled under foot  
Their souls' defect, by self-set tendence towards

The absolute good ; whom death holds therefore not  
In more than freshening slumber, and who, prime  
Resurgents of all life, haste now to live.

*Luniel.* Heard'st thou the word ?

*Angel of Earth.* The word I heard, Earth, be !  
And earth meseemed in echoing, learned to live.

*Phanuel.* So swift the omnific word, scarce syllabled, lo !  
The perfect orb, in shape as erst, but made  
Purer, ætherial, instantly restored,  
As these glad eyes but now behold, to form,  
And purified, by God's sole actful word.

*Angel of Earth.* Be glad with me, ye angels ! Earth  
from sleep

Regenerative, awakening, all her powers  
Her beauties, spring spontaneous ; gum and pine  
Entwine their shadows ; lily and violet blend  
Odours ; and myrtle and bay on morning gales  
Eve's perfumes, stored with starry jasmin, musk,  
And rose in amicable exchange, shall strew.

*Guardian Angel.* See paradise her growth of nectarous  
flowers

Revives, to crown the eternal season's hours !  
Away, ill ; pain, away ! Creation, burst  
Into one orderly hymn of joy ; all life  
Sing, voluntary, his love, who willed to make  
From evil all good, as all from nothing, first ;  
Henceforth with changeless boons and beauties rife  
For his own glory, and for his creatures' sake ;  
(Of him so loved, all his with rational hope  
Endowed that they might trace in nature's scope  
Presage of perfectness all lives should take.  
No fire, no sea ; all elements to one form  
Final, of universal use, and plan,  
Reverting ; air invulnerable of storm ;  
Earth, pure, transpicuous, shadowless ; and man  
Apt for commune with God, as he began.

*Angels.* The world begins and ends with paradise,  
The garden and the city of the blessed ;  
Begins with paradise and ends with heaven.

*Angel of Earth.* Thee, thank we, Lord ! all powers of  
spiritual light,

Concerned thy counsels to partake, and spread  
Wideliest we may allwhere the holy ends  
Of thy benevolence. Most, earth's warden, I.

*God.* Go, angel ! guide her as erewhile through heaven.

*Luniel.* Sometime my half-gloomed sphere, again may  
live.

*Angel of Earth.* On ! on ! my world again !  
Again we fly  
Through heaven's blue plain,

As thought through the eye;  
 Ye angels keep your heaven.  
 I earth. For that with God  
 I have striven;  
 And have prevailed,  
 I come once more;  
 I come to thee, earth!  
 Like a ship to shore.

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## XLI.

Millennial earth, transfigured to a star,  
 The rebegotten world, see, born again;  
 Good, universal order, peace and joy.  
 Fruits of the new creation, all the heirs  
 Holy, of light, share; sweet command in these,  
 In those, obedience sweeter still. All art  
 Sublimed, all science hallowed, to best ends,  
 Life worldly made life heavenly by God's law  
 Pervasive, spiritual ill, pain bodily, cease.  
 Are gloriously disproven all godless doubts,  
 Earth's caverned prophecies, of oracular reek  
 Voiced, not divine breath, of mere fleshlihood.  
 Virtues incorporate spiritual-wise, with heaven  
 Linked, their original nature show and end.  
 Life lower now with more intelligence dowered,  
 Docile, unharmed, gladdens in fates humane.

*Earth Millennial.*

ARCHANGEL, ANGEL OF EARTH, LUNIEL, ANGELS, SAINTS,  
 ANGELA, FESTUS, and CLARA.

*Angel of Earth.* God and the world one Holy family;  
 The houses of the heavens and earth allied;  
 That was the prophecy, and this the proof;  
 Love the beginning of the great return.

*Luniel.* I had a happy vision yesternight.  
 Methought I saw the gathering of all tribes  
 Of men returning out of dateless death,  
 Unto the Holy land, the land of life.

*Saints.* We saw it likewise; we, yea, all of us,  
 And heard the angels sing: far up mid heaven  
 Their blessed words resounded, of our thoughts  
 The pure celestial echoes; this their hymn.

They come from the ends of the earth,  
 White with its aged snows;  
 From the bounding breast of the tropic tide,  
 Where the day-beam ever glows;  
 From the east where first they dwelt,  
 From the north, and the south, and the west,  
 Where the sun puts on his robe of light,  
 And lays down his crown to rest.

Out of every land they come ;  
 Where the palm triumphant grows,  
 Where the vine overshadows the roofs and the hills,  
 And the gold orb'd orange glows :  
 Where the olive and fig-tree thrive,  
 And the rich pomegranates red,  
 Where the citron blooms, and the apple of ill  
 Bows down its fragrant head.

From the lands where the gems are born ;  
 Opal and emerald bright ;  
 From shores where the ruddy corals grow,  
 And pearls with their mellow light ;  
 Where silver and gold are dug,  
 And the diamond rivers roll,  
 And the marble white as the still moonlight  
 Is quarried, and jetty coal ;—

They come—with a gladdening shout ;  
 They come—with a tear of joy ;  
 Father and daughter, youth and maid,  
 Mother and blooming boy.  
 A thousand dwellings they leave,  
 Dwellings—but not a home ;  
 To them there is none but the sacred soil,  
 And the land whereto they come.

And the Temple again shall be built,  
 And filled as it was of yore ;  
 And the burden be lift from the heart of the world,  
 And the nations all adore ;  
 Prayers to the throne of heaven  
 Morning and eve shall rise,  
 And unto and not of the Lamb  
 Shall be the sacrifice.

*Angel of Earth.* As isles, disjoined by superficial deeps,  
 Yet rooted stand in unity with worlds ;  
 So with the interior continent of heaven,  
 Earth and its own.

*Saints.* Now know we the whole world  
 The land of heavenly commerce, where both kinds  
 Of men and angels mix with mutual gain ;  
 With knowledge, and with wisdom, and with joy  
 Flowing ; the final festival of time.

*Archangel.* Angels, God's gracious ministry, doubt ye  
 not,  
 In many a sphere,—by laws of light and weight  
 With yours commutual bound, as ye to them,  
 Spiritual, by sense of right and truth, by proof,  
 By love of Deity, and by bonds to both  
 Common of virtue and piety, interchange  
 With chosen intelligences and spirits of power,  
 Thrones and all heavenly excellences, who scale  
 The star-stair of perfection's tower, glad news  
 Of orbs, even yours, regenerate. Every globe

A mansion of the spirit, world-blessing souls  
Mingle at large with men. Know, who would prove  
Divinity by deeds works miracles; who  
By words, speaks mysteries mixed with clearest truths.  
All revelation is a mystery, here.

*Angel of Earth.* The ultimate mysteries faith shall  
celebrate,

Perfective, of the holy spirit, are God's;  
Whose manifold salvation all imbounds,  
Sinner and saint, one world completing plan.

*Saints.* O holy Angel, warden of the world,  
Who guidedst its first footsteps o'er the path,  
Untried of newest space, well trodden now,  
Which round the sun it circleth; and thou, too,  
Serenest of all angels, fairest, first,  
Of those here culled, the flower of heaven's bright hosts,  
Who knowest the heart of truth, and well may'st smile  
At legends of the birth of sun and stars,  
The atomic ancestries of elements,  
And infantile antiquity of time,—  
We in this sphere rejoice that with ye we  
The truth possess and glory in. Do thou  
Speak then, who canst, bright angel guide of earth,  
If leisure thine, whose long experience tends  
Far past the immediate parentage of time,  
Into eternal æons, what to us  
The Godblessed words may prove of living light.  
Instruct us in the wisdom of the heavens,  
At once the gate and goal of the true life  
The empyrean shadows, so that we,  
Like self obedient elements, which contain  
Their total laws and partial liberties,  
The reign of God may honour in all spheres,  
And act therewith concordantly, as here.

*Angel of Earth.* As when one wise in Nature's ways of  
old,

Gazing through optic lens, heaven's spatial plains,  
Perceived that what to naked eye black blanks  
Unfathomable, and lonesome adits seemed  
From universe to universe, were in truth  
Crowded with suns; so, too, created mind,  
Scanning the depths of Deity, must confess,  
When by his will enlightened, that what shows  
As mere inexplicable judgment, fate,  
Imposed by arbitrary ruler, first,  
Proves, rightly known of good and glory full,  
As firmamental fields with orbs of life.  
For infinitely various are the ways  
Wherein God conquers evil; at one time  
Slowly eradicating, line by line,

Its fatal features, and again, by one  
 Annihilative word, destroying it.  
 The sphere I mourned as mine, to ruin doomed,  
 God hath restored to being; and newly dowered  
 With life, and holy soul, transformed, it beams  
 Self-shining. And, recipient of all bliss  
 Unmerited, unmeasured, she the like  
 Imparts to all who in her hallowed light,  
 Gladden. Thereto, I now; God bidden to tend.

*Lumièr.* The issue of all ages is at hand.

*Angel of Earth.* Heaven's ways are always cyclical; its  
 events,

All orbital, its æras; and albeit  
 The sin of man, Promethean, never cease,  
 Nor the avenging vulture's beak, blood-wet;  
 Yet is the arrow always on the wing,  
 Which seeks the heart of vengeance, seeks and slays.  
 So from the first divine forgiveness clasps,  
 To her all quickening bosom, all which live;  
 Calls all by name, and naming, halloweth them.

*Saints.* Thus, by God's goodness, goodness comes to us  
 Out of his boundless plenitude; and man,  
 The shadowy semblance of the vast divine,  
 Like a dark sphere absorbed into the sun,  
 As in presecular time emergent thence,  
 His constellated seat assumes in heaven,  
 A deathless incarnation of the light.  
 And this despite of evil, sin, and pain,  
 That every faculty be perfected,  
 And all affection purified in man;  
 Love being love of good, hate, hate of ill;  
 Divinest hate, unanimous with love.  
 Wherefore to those who realize God's will,  
 And with the same their own assimilate,  
 Water in water flowing, air in air,  
 Passive as silence, active as the light,  
 Receiving and dispensing, moments fall  
 Like silver raindrops stippled in the ground,  
 Whose resurrection is in grain of gold.  
 But with the generation of the world,  
 Who their back turned upon the sun to toy  
 With their own shadows, meanly pleased to mark  
 Their selfgrowth, not considering that the more  
 These things extend themselves, the nearer they  
 To their extinction;—not thus. Night comes on;  
 And lo! the whole flock in the fold of death.

*Angel of Earth.* Ends and beginnings mingle at the  
 last;

All ultimates are foreordained; these days,  
 And those far times, when yon fair flowering orb,

Lily-like, beamed out of time's shadowy tide ;  
 And spread its bright and continental leaves,  
 Fragrant with sunny incense, to the heavens.  
 But his infallible eye, beneath whose beam  
 Essence becomes appearance, every day  
 Doomsday, an inner circlet of pure time,  
 Concentric with eternity, and part  
 Of the same all inclusive octave here,  
 The darkness from the light shall sejugate ;  
 The visible veil of the invisible.  
 And the times near when all shall be complete ;  
 The golden seed from ripe fulfilment fall ;  
 Eternal mind immortal utterance make ;  
 The many-coloured arch a circle be ;  
 Earth's orb elect her crescent horns conjoin  
 With light perpetual, total, vital light ;  
 And, the mixed past made pure and holy, cause  
 The present paradise, the future heaven.

*Saints.* Man's being is an everlasting birth ;  
 We are ourselves the elements of heaven.  
 And as the eye is sacred to the sun,  
 So be the soul to God. It is sweet to point  
 To prophecies fulfilled, when spells of good.  
 To us extinct all ill, all sin, all woe ;  
 The world seems wreathed from end to end with joy,  
 And garlanded with glory, as the hall  
 Of some great populous palace at a feast.  
 Our nature we relume, too, as the sun,  
 From the bright burning atmosphere he breathes,  
 The starry spirits of his frame renews,  
 And revels in his glory without end.  
 So we in that divinity rejoice,  
 Wherein all spiritual essence is and acts,  
 Authentic because free.

*Angels.* Praise therefore heaven.

*Saints.* To thee, God, maker, ruler, saviour, judge !  
 The Infinite, the Universal One,  
 Whose righteousnesses are as numberless  
 As creature sins ; who giver art of life ;  
 Who sawest from the first that all was good,  
 Which thou didst make, and seal'dst it with thy love,  
 Thy boundless benediction on the world ;  
 To thee be honour, glory, prayer and praise,  
 And full-orbed worship from all worlds, all heavens.  
 May every being bless thee in return  
 As thou dost bless it ; every age and orb  
 Utter to thee the praise thou dost inspire.  
 Let man, Lord ! praise thee most, as all redeemed,  
 As many in the saints, as one in thee.  
 Oh may perpetual pleasure, peace, and joy,

And spiritual light inform all souls;  
 And grace and mercy in bliss thousandfold  
 Enwrap the world of life. May all who dwell  
 On open earth, or in the hid abyss,  
 Howe'er they sin or suffer, in the end,  
 Receive, as beings born at first of thee,  
 The mercy that is mightier than all ill.  
 May all souls love each other in all worlds,  
 And all conditions of existence: even  
 As now these lower lives that dwell with man  
 In amity, rejoicing in the care  
 Of their superior, and in useful peace,  
 Upon the common earth, no more distained  
 With mutual slaughter—no more doomed to groan  
 At sight of woe, and cruelty, and crime.  
 Lo! all things now rejoicing in the life  
 Thou art to each and givest, live to thee;  
 And knowing other's nature and their own  
 Live in serene delight, content with good,  
 Yet earnest for the last and best degree.  
 Their hands are full of kindness, and their tongues  
 Are full of blessings, and their hearts of good.  
 All things are happy here. May kindness, truth,  
 Wisdom, and knowledge, liberty and power,  
 Virtue and holiness, o'erspread all orbs  
 As this star now; the world be bliss and love;  
 And heaven alone be all things; till at last  
 The music from all souls redeemed shall rise,  
 Like a perpetual fountain of pure sound,  
 Upspringing, sparkling in the silvery blue;  
 From round creation to thy feet, O God!

*Festus.* One's fellow conquerors recognized in peace,  
 How calm, how sweet this life! from passion pure,  
 From natural evils freed. The storm of time  
 The world hath wept through, and the whirl of life  
 Once mine, shows like an agonized dream  
 Hung in the halls of memory, bannerwise;  
 Proof-sign of victory passed. Speak, angel-bride,  
 Being of bliss and beauty, seems not this  
 The peace serene thy spirit longed for once?

*Clara.* It is. How doubly dear all sacred thing  
 Show to the soul elect salvation here  
 Hath hallowed; and how blessed the high employ,  
 God's wisdom teaching to millennial man,  
 And learning love divine.

*Festus.* Doubt's tempest-age  
 Soothed into silent and profound belief;  
 The soul's ambitious and ill-ordered quests  
 Chastened to aspirations; all desires,  
 Calm as the regular breathings of the breast.

What joy to worship, in our heart recrowned,  
 The exiled sovereign of earth's youth, long lost,  
 Our old paternal faith!—What joy to feel,  
 Though life-deforming passions come and go,  
 Stormlike, and cloudlike, high o'er all, the spirit  
 Stands, in impassive purity and peace,  
 Identical with heaven. See, soul of light,  
 Thy kindred angel!

*Angela.* Yes. This joy is mine,  
 To quit betimes the grandeurs of the sun,  
 His continents of light and sea-like springs  
 Of radiance, here to wander by their side  
 Beloved on earth as mine; and ye are they  
 I loved most. Most of all it gladdeneth me  
 In hallowed commune thus to help expand  
 The spirit capacious of extremest truth,  
 With ends beneficent; so that kindly act  
 Keep pace with godly thought.

*Festus.* God's universe,  
 A boundless field for ever-active good,  
 To soul so bent, unfolds. While, world by world,—  
 Through all successive spheres, the aspiring spirit,  
 Death born, yet reascendent, till it come,  
 Through many a cradling starlet, to the orb  
 Whence its predestined rise shall end all proof,  
 Restore the wanderer to the way, and blend  
 Life momentary with the eternal state,  
 The everlasting order of all days,—  
 Wisdom her many-chambered dome reveals,  
 Her graduated heaven.

*Clara.* Content with this,  
 One altar in her thousand-shrinèd fane,  
 Earth's simpler souls their rites of truth and love  
 Like faithfully fulfil with those enthroned  
 Who look down on the empyrean. Here  
 All knowledge sanctified, all mind enlarged,  
 All faculties reformed, how perfect seems  
 To eyes illumed with truth's interior light,  
 Self-opening, flowerlike, those most gracious trials  
 Our souls once suffered; sufferings now enjoyed.

*Angela.* What lengths we reach of spiritual light;  
 What breadths now compass of celestial views;  
 What heights faith's visionary eye commands;  
 What depths we fathom of divinity;  
 Let him tell, who can count the motes of air,  
 Stars, and the rays of stars, or God's good deeds.

*Festus.* Alas! what mean conceptions once were man's  
 Of God; his essence, nature, ends. In vain  
 Men thought to magnify the Infinite,  
 Who merely magnified their own small thought,

And made it monstrous. Not in vain for such  
 May we thy pity ask, thy pardon, Lord ;  
 For us, the joy to feel, the gift to prove  
 Love, power, and wisdom omnicausal thine,  
 Which from the fount divine of being flow.  
 With hatred and revenge are base effects,  
 And passions, to mean natures only known ;  
 Not to be charged to God, nor named with him.  
 Passions are proofs of imperfection. Thou  
 Only hast all perfections, God ! who art  
 Eternal reason quickening boundless laws ;  
 The laws of love, life, light, wherein be based  
 The world's sublime foundations.

*Angela.* Oh, how vast  
 The glories of the future, once mismatched  
 'Gainst earth-life merely, and all its littleness.

*Clara.* Were happiness alone our being's aim,  
 We, over nature reigning and mere soul,  
 Pure intellect, and all whom, led by them  
 Our better lot is here to raise, refine,  
 Enlighten, free from inner mental bonds,  
 Oh, glorious rule ! it might indeed seem well  
 For good of others and our own delight,  
 This natural dispensation and divine,  
 This first degree of heaven should aye endure.

*Angela.* True ; earth is all one Eden. Pity 'twere,  
 That it should ever end.

*Saint.* I say not so ;  
 Although I have a thousand plans in hand,  
 Some interwoven with the farthest stars—  
 Each one of which might ask a year of years  
 To perfect.

*Clara.* Be it ; our Maker knoweth best  
 What thought or deed may best belong to time,  
 Or to eternity.

*Saint.* All prophecy  
 Hath said the earth shall cease, and that right soon.

*Festus.* It is like enough. Beauty's akin to death.

*Angel.* Behold, our sister graces of the skies,  
 Faith, Hope, and Love, descend ! Methinks of late  
 Ye chiefly dwell on earth.

*Love.* Where lives and reigns  
 The divine humanity, there are we ever seen,  
 Successive, as the seasons to the sun.

*Saints.* Well are ye known and welcome in all worlds.  
 Wherever lofty thought or godly deed  
 Is lodged or compassed, there your blessings rest.

*Hope.* How sweet, how sacred now, this earth of man's,  
 The prelude of a yet sublimer bliss !—

I marked it from the first, while yet it lay  
 Lightless and stirless ; ere the forming fire  
 Was kindled in its bosom, or the land  
 Lift its volcanic breastwork up from sea.  
 The deluge and idolatries of men  
 I viewed, though shuddering, and with faltering eye,  
 E'en to the incarnation of heaven's Truth,  
 And dawn of earth's best faith ; that faith which fled  
 An infant, waxed anon a giant ; peeped,  
 A star, and grew a heaven-fulfilling sun ;  
 Which was an outcast, and became, ere long,  
 A dweller in all palaces ; which hid  
 Its head in dens of deserts, and sat throned,  
 After, in richest temples high as hills :  
 Which, poured out painfully in mortal blood,  
 Rose an immortal spirit ; as a slave  
 Was sold for gold and prostrated to power ;—  
 And now that lowly bondmaid is a queen ;  
 And lo ! she is beloved in earth and heaven ;  
 And lieth in the bosom of her Lord,  
 The bride of the all-worshipped, one with God.

*Love.* We, even of divinest origin,  
 In infinite progression view all worlds ;  
 And we are happy.

*Faith.* The dead sleep as yet ;  
 But their day cometh, and the bonds of death  
 Already slacken around the living soul ;  
 The mortal sleep, of ages, which began  
 When time sank down into his slumberous west,  
 Thins even now o'er the reviving eyes,  
 Gathering their heaven-lent light, no more to wane  
 In woe or age : never be quenched in tears,  
 Like a star in the sea. It is as I ever knew ;  
 My life is to receive and to believe  
 The word and words of God.

*Love.* I who am Love,  
 And Grace, and Charity, rejoice with you,  
 Whither ye wend I with ye ; whether here,  
 Or on the utmost rim of Light's broad reign,  
 The least and last of stars which even seems  
 To tremble at its insignificance,  
 In presence of Infinity ; where yet  
 No angel's wing hath waved, nor foot of fiend  
 Left its hot imprint ;—still, in all do we  
 Find fit delight and honour, as now here.  
 Now earth and heaven hold commune, day and night ;  
 There's not a wind but bears upon its wing  
 The messages of God ; and not a star  
 But knows the bliss of earth.

*Festus.*

The earth hath God

Remade, and all its elements refined,  
 Fit for sublimer being. Flesh hath passed  
 Its fiery baptism, and come forth clear  
 As crystal gold : all that of vile or mean  
 Pertained to it hath perished atomless.  
 The kindred ties of family and race,  
 Intensified into identity, now,  
 Earth, like a diamond, basks in her own free light,  
 Unfed, unaided, unrequiring aught.  
 All now is purity, and power, and peace.  
 The first-born of creation, they who hail  
 Archangels as their brethren, mountainlike  
 Reign o'er the plains of men, converting all ;  
 Reaping the fields of immortality,  
 Each one his sheaf, for him the harvest-Lord ;  
 To whom belongs earth's whole estate and life,  
 And every world's.

*Angel.*

And he shall garner all.

The awful tribes which have in Hades dwelt,  
 Passed count of time, await their rising. God's  
 Great day, the sabbath of the world's long week,  
 Is at high noon ; and Christ hath yet to come,  
 To judge and save the living and the dead.

*Clara.* The shadows of eternity o'ercast  
 Already time's bright towers. The heavens shall come  
 Down like a cloud upon the hill, and sweep  
 Their spirit over earth, and the whole face  
 And form of things shall be dissolved and changed.  
 Nothing shall be but essence, perfect, pure,  
 And void of every attribute but God's.  
 This even is too gross for that to come,  
 The holy have the earth, and heaven is theirs.

*Festus.* Nor pain, nor toil of mind or frame, nor doubt  
 Nor discontent, nor enmity to God,  
 Disturb the steady joy the spirit feels ;  
 Nor element can torture, nor time tire ;  
 Nor sea nor mountain make or bar or fear ;  
 Sickness and woe and death are things gone by ;  
 Destroyed with the destruction of the world :—  
 Shadows of things which have been, never more  
 To waste the world's bright hours, nor grate the heart  
 Of mighty man ; now fit for thrones and wings ;  
 Ruler of worlds, main minister of heaven,  
 Inheritor of all the prophecies  
 Of God, fore-uttered through the tongues of time,  
 Ages of ages. Evil is no more.

*Archangel.* And does earth satisfy thee now ?

*Festus.*

As earth.

There is a brighter, loftier life for man  
 Even yet, the very union with God.

*Archangel.* God works by means. Between the two extremes

Of earth and heaven there lies a mediate state,—  
 A pause between the lightning lapse of life  
 And following thunders of eternity ;—  
 Between eternity and time a lapse,  
 To soul unconscious, though age-lasting, where  
 Spirit is tempered to its final fate ;  
 Within or between worlds, repose or bliss  
 Divested, man shall mix with deity,  
 And the eternal and immortal make  
 One being. As in earth's first paradise  
 God's spirit walked with man, and commune made  
 With him, so in the second, after death,  
 Man's spirit walks with God in an elect  
 Existence, and a vigil of the great,  
 The holy day which is to break in heaven.  
 Thither Truth's prophet went, in the dread hour  
 That hell by earth on heaven revenged itself,  
 With one soul penitent 'compained ;—nor long  
 Remained, but while enough to cheer earth's troop  
 Of foremost disobedients, heads of Sin's  
 Long line, who soul enlightened firm received  
 With time-outwearing hope that yet in God  
 They should partake the fulness of his love.  
 And with him rose then, in prophetic proof  
 Of immortality, many a deathless ghost,  
 Triumphant o'er that blind revenge which wrought  
 Hell ! thy destruction—thy salvation, earth !

*Festus.* That such will be, the just well know ; and all  
 Earth's great events and changes tend thereto ;  
 Its fiery dissolution in the passed,  
 And supernatural rebirth which now  
 The chosen and the world-redeemed partake.

*Archangel.* And this shall last, till like the setting sun  
 Deserting earth, he shall retire to heaven,  
 With all his captive victors in his train,  
 Triumphant, and translated evermore  
 Into the hierarchal skies. Wilt see,  
 While yet time is, earth's shadowy world within—  
 The living death she hearts, and, augur-like,  
 Explore the ominous bowels of the sphere ?  
 As one great life it is pervadeth all  
 That bud, breathe, beam, so in the spirit world,  
 Of God, his will through countless ministries  
 Confided potently, works publicly ;  
 And I, the liberating angel, marked  
 From supramundane time, act to this end.  
 To me are given the secrets of the centre,  
 The keys of earth, to lock and to unlock,

Coffer-like. I it was who seized and bound,  
At his behest who wills and it is done,  
Even on their thrones, the mighty thou wilt see.

*Festus.* Angel of heaven! I would view these things.

*Archangel.* Nor these alone, but other wonders yet.  
The valley Death's dark pinions brooded o'er,  
A life-offending night, unvisited  
By sun or star, where but the fatuous fire  
Of man's weak judgment, wandered till God's hand  
Laid o'er the black abyss a bridge of life,  
And married earth to heaven's mainland thou'lt see,  
Death's grave; and over him, that monument  
Of light, enlightening earth. 'The gods and fiends  
Of old, and all the fictions of man's heart,  
Imagined of the future passed for aye,  
Thou shalt inspect. Behold this mountain! We  
Must pass through it; for under lie the gates  
(Of the invisible regions whereunto  
We tend, for a brief season.

*Festus.* On then!

*Archangel.* Bare  
Thy marble breast, O mountain, to its depths!  
An angel and a man divine demand  
A way through these foundations.

*Festus.* And the rocks  
Open like mists before thee.

*Archangel.* Follow me!

## XLII.

The soul-state, intermediate 'twixt earth's life  
And the world future, unconceived till seen,  
We search with curious awe; mark dormant death;  
Nor, joyless, evil accost, by heaven restrained;  
From bonds æonian loosened, ere the end;  
View, visionary, the circle of false gods,  
Refractions of the sole and infinite One,  
Conceptions imperfect of deity, held  
Of old, by ignorant and idolatrous man,  
Yet honest, who his best faculties adored  
Unwittingly, his mere passions:—ruined, chained,  
Worshipless, all bear witness to one true,  
All-free, all-necessary, all holy God.  
Error's unreal immortality, see  
Extinguished by God's verity: hear the word  
Divine, by all obeyed.

*Hades.*

ARCHANGEL, FESTUS, DEATH, LUCIFER.

*Festus.* Almighty God! sustain me. This is death:—  
And this—I knew not, angel, he was here—

Is Lucifer, the fallen ; and like a bolt  
 Of thunder forged in intramundane air,  
 Self-buried within the centre. Not in hell ;  
 Where every spirit's work, by fire is tried ;  
 For there is fierce exaction of just dues,  
 Stern course of forfaults compurgate ; remorse,  
 Flame-toothed, with bite unflickering, find I him ;  
 But here, God-bounden in rest.

*Archangel.*

O Lucifer !

Wake from thy sea-like sleep, time's calm so long,  
 Long and unfathomable hath ceased. Arise  
 In peace or wrath, rouse from thine age-long trance,  
 And see ; earth's representative, and heaven's,  
 Stand by thee. Closed, death's intermediate state,  
 Heaven's breath blows freely round us as the air  
 Vital of all futurity.

*Lucifer.*

Heaven's just doom

Respect thou, angel ; nor thou, mortal, erst  
 Vassal, last victor, vaunt thou this, nor blame  
 Fate's word, for that, forespoken.

*Festus.*

I blame no more

The part thou took'st once in my mortal life ;  
 It is gone ; nor spurn thee for delusions dead.  
 The blood man's strife once spilled is sunk in earth,  
 Run into rivers, seas ; dried up in air ;  
 Air, water, earth themselves, all elements, gone,  
 With the sin itself ; even sin being expiate now  
 By sufferance of just doom ; good done to soul  
 Wronged ; and first innocence rightly sought of God.  
 As therefore came by freedom sin, by sin  
 Knowledge, and last by knowledge wished return  
 Godwards, what good hath come of all I bear  
 Alone at heart ; and if we have both, time passed,  
 Offended God, let me, though in nature not  
 To forget—forgive what each man once hath felt,  
 The devil's all-burning grip upon his heart.  
 Thee view I with compassion ; half with hope.

*Lucifer.* Mortal ! I bow to thee, and would to the least  
 And lowest of all the spirits that God hath made ;  
 Being in ill his worser, but that the curse  
 I am accursed with of impenitency,  
 Outlasts the elements—outlives all time.

*Festus.* All curses cease with time ; all ill, all woe.  
 Blessings star forth for ever ; but a curse  
 Is like a cloud—it passeth.

*Lucifer.*

It is a cloud

Enshrouds creation. Good and ill perchance  
 Have one end.

*Archangel.* Mark the uncertain wit he words.  
 Twice-shot contrariwise his thought-woof seems

Itself to thwart reversive ; not of truth  
 Takes he yet hand-fast ; nought of right conceives  
 Indeviable ; and yet, once more, 'tis writ,  
 With miscreant strife, even faithless in himself,  
 His final fate he tempts, well-earned, so far  
 As finite spirit can deem ; nathless, strange change  
 In him once wrought, like strange to come may augur.

*Lucifer.* Angel and mortal, hear ! who else save God  
 Can fathom nature ? who unveil, he sole,  
 Except, who clothed ? Me needs not here defend,  
 Mine office preappointed ; nor yet tell  
 What thoughts if vacillant, still perchance not vain  
 Wholly, have filled my soul since thus. Dread thou  
 The executant of God's vengeance, for by him  
 Yon angel, only not almighty, there !  
 As with a chain of mountains, I was bound,  
 And hurled into this unformed nebulous life ;  
 Stripped of all might when mightiest, struck down  
 While triumphing the loftiest,—enslaved,  
 When most a monarch o'er both earth and hell,  
 And made a shadow among shadows here.  
 It recks not. Let the impenetrable soul  
 Be ground as through a mill ; know only I  
 In action or inaction equal woe ;  
 Suffering, doing, being, one extreme.  
 Pass on ! we meet again.

*Festus.* And when we do,  
 May God forgive, as I !

*Archangel.* Mayhap thou wilt yet  
 Know me as minister of his mercy.

*Lucifer.* I !  
 I look for mercy ? never ! Least, when now  
 Plotting the sum of evil.

*Archangel.* Behold there Death !  
 Throned on his tomb—entombèd in his throne ;  
 Just as he ceased he rests for aye ; his scythe,  
 Still wet out of its bloody swathe, one hand  
 Tottering sustains : the other strikes the cold  
 Drops from his bony brow ; his mouldy breath  
 Tainteth all air.

*Festus.* I dread him now no more,  
 Nor hate. He is a vanquished enemy.

*Archangel.* Listen ! he speaks.

*Death.* To you, ye sons of God,  
 My latest words I utter. Unto him  
 Who ever lives, and hath for aye destroyed  
 Me and my reign, give ye this crown usurped,  
 And lay it at his feet ; and this dulled dart  
 Which was my sceptre. To the conqueror  
 Belong these trophies. All the progeny

Of time will soon cease. Lo ! the end's at hand.

*Archangel.* Thus shall it be, O Death ! and thus it is.  
But hear, O Death ! and thou, great Fiend ; the will  
Of the Eternal Life, the all-present Good  
Is that I free ye both. Thou Death, depart ;  
Seek other sphere, where poised with life minute  
Thou mayst existence match, and wait God's will,  
Largening or lessening. Rise thou, hell's lord. Behold !  
Even while I speak, so mighty shows his word,  
Those chains though mountain-ribbed, and fit to bind  
The tide to the sea's bed, like clotted snow,  
Fall from thy feet. Up, then, and do thy will,  
Whate'er it be, and wheresoever. Go !

*Lucifer.* Let us away, O Death !

*Death.*

Let us away !

My realm I leave behind me.

*Lucifer.*

I mine seek.

*Festus.* Lo ! they are gone. Earth's breath is purified.  
The air feels lighter, I breathe easier since.  
Who now these giant shades of awe which fill  
The midst, the present of the place ? And whose  
Yon throne inane whose perilous void bespeaks  
A central terror which, unseen, more awes  
Than others' presence ?

*Archangel.* Heaven to them thereby  
Their state subordinate shows ; the doom of pride.  
These are the mighty nothings man of old  
Made ; unrealities dread by whom he swore,  
Prayed to, and sacrificed ; brother falsehoods all ;  
Men like himself, imagination changed  
To gods ; for good deeds these, and those for bad :  
Or, angels who aspiring to be gods,  
Made themselves, deathless nothings ; lords of death,  
And fire, and judgment ; lords of time and war ;  
Beauty, and strength, and light ; and the long roll  
Of creatural powers and passions deified.  
Abstractions made by men, by God preserved—  
Preserved as shadows thus to realize,  
Before all devotees, their nothingness ;  
Who gave their names to stars which still roam round  
The skies, all worshipless, even from climes  
Where their own altars once topped every hill.  
Attend, their reign is over. These their last  
Oracular utterances alone are true.

*Zeus.* O God supreme, sole, all the gods to thee  
Restore their stolen titles. Thou alone  
Hast true right to the names of deity.  
First Cause, and imperceptible, unseen ;  
If apprehended, only by pure soul ;  
Source of all life, transcendent and eterne ;

Source of all measure, motion, time, and change ;  
 Who makeest, movest, rulest all ; thyself  
 Impassible, immoveable, unmade ;  
 The one great Spirit of the universe.  
 Who the world made of heaven and earth, as man  
 Of mind and body. Father of all life,  
 Whose living spirit animates the whole ;  
 Governs and guides to ends both blessed and wise ;  
 Gave mind its active power ; to nature gives  
 Eternal pregnancy, perpetual birth ;  
 And reasonable order, aye renewed ;  
 The light of heaven, the parent of the world ;  
 Who art eternally, and causest things  
 To be, which heretofore have never been ;  
 The sovereign will, the intellect, the soul,  
 The perfect good, the perfect fair, the All ;  
 One, immaterial, who by one sole act  
 Dost all things comprehend ; and bliss supreme  
 Enjoyest, by knowing perfectly thyself.  
 Among the worlds how many are thy names !  
 For as the sun in divers tongues hath names  
 As many, yet to all men is but one,  
 So thou, however named, art God the sole.  
 Creator and adorer of the heavens ;  
 Ruler most high of gods, and sire of man ;  
 First, best and greatest of all beings, last ;  
 Kind conqueror of all foes ; of all create  
 The infinite reason, the substantive cause ;  
 The forces of all life, impersonate.  
 Thou knowest and foreknowest all at once ;  
 Thou givest good and evil to all souls.  
 Thine arm sweeps over sea and land ; thine eye  
 Pierceth all elements, to the Hadëan shades,  
 Where thou art throned, too, as in upper skies ;  
 Thy throne coequal with the universe.  
 The proud thou dost rebuke with death ; with life  
 Immortal dost reward the just and true.  
 All who have served or loved thee thou dost love,  
 And worship givest of all men in the heavens.  
 With souls beneficent, innocent, and pure  
 Thou dost the largest and the loveliest stars  
 For aye consociate. All belong to thee,  
 And those who love thee ; heaven and all its worlds.  
*Apollo.* Soul of the toilful sun, who dost unite  
 Creator and created ; light of God,  
 And God of light ; of human and immortal  
 Spirit, sole physician ; victor thou of sin,  
 That hell-born serpent, thee, we gods adore ;  
 The sovereign truth, who neither canst deceive  
 Nor be deceived ; let earth and heaven their crown  
 Offer at the altar of thy fatherly knee.

**Osiris.** Lord of the threefold region, life and death,  
 And everlasting being ; king of gods ;  
 Builder and benefactor of all worlds ;  
 Who cast earth's rock foundation, and with hills  
 Walled it about, and moated with the sea ;  
 Thou, sitting in the shining house of life,  
 Movest with thy foot the everlasting wheel  
 Of nature, and man's members mould'st divine ;  
 Breathest in them their soul, and takest back ;  
 Life-issuing as the sun imparteth light ;  
 Glad re-awakener of the soul in heaven.  
 Eternal, all-beneficent, Lord of truth ;  
 King of obedient natures ; for thy will,  
 Perforce or favour, all create obey.  
 Distributor of destinies ; lord beloved  
 Of spirits in the land of joy divine,  
 The land of purity, and light, and peace.  
 So should earth be, oracular truth once said,  
 And thus it is. Lord of stability,  
 For heavenly things alone endure for aye.  
 Eternal vivifier of all heavens !  
 Before thy face the impure cannot abide.  
 The crowned slave mocks thee ; and like hills of sand,  
 Crumbling beneath the ruin of thy tread,  
 Earth's mountains tremble, and her high places fall.  
 Thy name is higher than the highest heaven ;  
 Thy glory firmer than the firmament.  
 Ruler of spirits ; of heaven's superior spheres ;  
 The earthly, and the nether world of hell ;  
 Beginningless and endless, the one cause,  
 Great, unimpersonable ; whose attributes  
 Are beings, and whose thoughts creations ; thou,  
 From whose mouth wordlike the round world is born.  
 Sovran of souls, and reëstablisher,  
 Who plantest the divine life in man's mind ;  
 Who weighest man's actions in his heart, ere yet  
 They bud in speech, or fruit in deed of hand.  
 The birth and breath of prophecy ; of time  
 Maker ; of all, eternal head and end.  
 The Lord of Hades, dwelling in the tomb ;  
 Death henceforth clean and sanctified to man ;  
 Who with just sceptre rulest righteous souls.  
 Joy of the just on earth, the bleesed in heaven ;  
 Treating all evil with thy sacred scourge ;  
 Lord of the visible and invisible life ;  
 Being of beings ; causer of causes ; God.

**Auramazd.** Illimitable essence, unconceived ;  
 One Spirit infinite : from all thy works  
 Dissimilar, great dispenser of all good ;  
 Best of all best, and wisest of all wise ;

Father of justice and of equity ;  
 Perfect, who knowest all things from thyself.  
 The Lord of nature ; not to be bribed by gifts  
 Nor mocked by false prayers. Teacher sole of truth,  
 To those high souls whose wisdom is their joy,  
 Their everlasting strength, their inner heaven ;  
 Cohéritors, and spirit peers of power,  
 These, who by intuition half-divine  
 Of the interior light, the light conceive ;  
 And, knowing God, all knowledge know of him ;  
 Ruler of earth and guardian, king of heaven ;  
 Who made this world, that heaven ; gave life to all ;  
 And from the radiant fingers of his sun  
 Streams indiscriminate blessings upon men ;  
 Children of earth and death, but planned to live  
 In an immortal future, pure from ill ;  
 Earth's mountain evils smoothed off ; the whole orb  
 Crystalline made ; themselves all shadowless.  
 He, with unerring prescience, perfect power,  
 Unchanging kindness acts, and wisest love ;  
 Who is the life of heaven ; the threefold one ;  
 Uniting deity and humanity,  
 Self-circled in the eternity divine ;  
 Drives evil's monster dæmon from the earth,  
 From human souls sin's shadow, and o'er all  
 Life sheds resplendent purity and bliss.

*Allah.* No god but God is. He is his own prophet.  
 God, self-sufficient, Lord of the great throne,  
 Higher than heaven, and wider than the earth ;  
 Vaster and more profound than the abyss ;  
 Whose is the kingdom of the universe.  
 Who comprehendeth all things ; made the sun  
 Star earth with flowers, and with his golden sword  
 Reap, like a labourer in the fields of light,  
 One everlasting harvest round the world ;  
 He made the moon succedent ; he ordained  
 Darkness and light ; he causeth life and death.  
 The heavens and earth stand firm at thy command ;  
 And all that is between them and beneath.  
 High, gracious, mighty, worthy of all praise  
 Art thou in this life, Lord ! and life to come.  
 Bounteous and wise, thou lovest the merciful ;  
 The holy, the forgiver thou of sin,  
 The acceptor of repentance ; faithful, just ;  
 Giver of peace, victorious ; excellent  
 Are all thy names, thy ways ; eternal Power !  
 Thou knowest all things hidden and divulged.  
 Beside thee there is no God, thou art one.  
 Although within the world, the world without ;  
 Who was ere time or space was ; and now is,

And will be though they both should cease for aye.  
Nigher to every being than its life,  
Too mighty still to live in aught create ;  
Too holy to conform to things of time ;  
Too perfect in all excellence to change.  
All angels he hath made, all heavens, all orbs ;  
Maintains and metes their natures, motives, ends,  
Accordant with his mighty will : foreknows  
All knowable things, and comprehends all known.  
He knows the number of the drops of dew,  
Spring's every leaflet, autumn's every seed,  
And sums the quivered shafts of every sun.  
The movement of all thought within man's brain ;  
The stir of every feeling in his heart ;  
The rise of every longing in his soul ;  
Sin's sooty trail and virtue's radiant track,  
Traced in the inmost spirit, shows unto him  
Clear as the course of comets in the sky.  
He knoweth his own secrets, and conceals  
From the united gaze of all create,  
His infinite aim, his purpose absolute.  
Neither to be resisted nor reversed  
Is his decree, delayed nor dallied with ;  
For at the fated moment all's fulfilled.  
Without all quality, pure essence, he  
Ears hath not, but hears all things ; eyes hath not,  
But all things sees ; nor distance is, nor dark  
To his divine cognition. To his touch  
All innermost substances are palpable ;  
The hearts of all things patent to his glance.  
Wise in his ways and just in his decrees,  
Nothing hath being but by him produced ;  
And though permitted evil, to him sole  
Pertains the right of knowing why it is,  
For God must not be questioned. He alone  
Hath all right, privilege, and prerogative.  
The world exists but by his sufferance.  
All things belong to him ; and into all,  
Brought out of mere privation into light,  
He entereth as possessor, maker, lord.  
Not from necessity aught created he ;  
Nor that to him were need of lower life ;  
Nor shadow of vantage from the universe ;  
But from his lovingkindness, grace, and will  
He breathed a vital blessing over space,  
Quickened the void infinitude with light,  
And filled the heavens with angels, earth with men.  
Who love him, worship him, obey him, he  
From his beneficent nature well rewards ;  
Not from their merit ; nor tie absolute

Existent 'twixt well-doing and reward,  
 For merit man hath none, but all is grace ;  
 Nor can God under obligation lie  
 To aught created, principle, or power.  
 Man all receives from, nothing gives to God,  
 But that he hath received ; the gift to praise,  
 The grace to thank ; the glory to adore.

*Archangel.* But that his name, to sanction war's foul  
 force

Invoked, gloomed earth's tale, Allah were not here.  
 False gods have had ere now true worshippers,  
 Who honoured names they wrongly deified ;  
 The true God false adorers, who him shamed,  
 If aught could, they deceitful knee'd, in base  
 And bloody service, so misdeemed ; or whose  
 Nature more horrible than their own they judged.  
 But now man's universal heart made pure  
 By penitence and penance, every fine  
 Paid to the utmost mite, all worship proves  
 The faith that's most humane is most divine,  
 Dearest to God and worthiest his approval.  
 Imperfect apprehension he not blames  
 Of things above man's intellectual grasp,  
 For thought less answerable than for act.  
 Of conduct most he judgeth, good or bad.  
 Who lives not equal to his highest sense  
 Of truth and good ; whose acts, judged by himself  
 Wrong, conscience damns ; doth, so far, wilful sin ;  
 His nature knowingly degrades ; and God,  
 Thereby offended, justly dooms such soul  
 To punishment proportionate ; fine being then,  
 And righteously, commensurate with offence ;  
 Or finite causes infinite, and outweighs ;  
 Law earthly more divine than heavenly, proves,  
 And man more just, more merciful than God ;  
 Which is not nor can be, as thou mayest yet  
 Know ere we quit this inward world of shades.

*Festus.* Oblivion's own ; like unrecorded dreams,  
 Ænigmas uninterpretable, these,  
 The worshipped perish ; the adorers live.

*Zeus.* Before the Christian cross and Moslem mosque  
 My marble fanes have fallen, and my shrines  
 Shrunk like a withered hand, ages ago.  
 But now all signs and sacred domes for gods  
 To dwell in are extinct. The world is all  
 One temple of the truth.

*Brahm.* The ages feigned,  
 That made time groan to think how old he was,  
 And deities in millions, are no more.  
 Ageless eternity, and God the sole,

The royalty of heaven, is at hand.  
 Maker, destroyer, saviour ! By all sense  
 Incomprehensible ; all things above,  
 True being, cause of all ; how, what, unknown.  
 One universal mind pervading all ;  
 Dwelling in ocean, penetrating earth,  
 Touching the heaven, enclosing all the stars ;  
 Inhabiting the universe, and through it  
 Passing like wind. All souls, all gods or men,  
 Shall fail in thee, as air, a phial holds,  
 Rejoineth infinite space, the crystal cell  
 Once broken which confined it. Yea, as streams  
 To ocean flowing, cease therein, all name  
 Losing, all form, so freed from life's sad yoke,  
 Created spirit once emanant from God,  
 Shall recombine with deity, and enjoy  
 In heaven's original bliss its primal power.

*Budh.* All things that are shall nothing be at last,  
 Save what's resolvable in deity ;  
 Yea, the whole world of old before thy face  
 Fading, stormlike beneath the sun, shall pass,  
 Absorbed in Godhood as some islet cloud  
 Melts midmost in the slowly darkening day.

*Festus.* Great be the misconceptions even of gods.

*Budh.* Giver, receiver, master of all life ;  
 The primal, final, universal soul ;  
 Pure deity absorbed in ultimate rest ;  
 Who knowest the number of all souls, all stars ;  
 Lord of the everduring dome of heaven,  
 The region of perfection, home of bliss,  
 Who dwell'st alone in the unseen, too pure  
 For death-doomed eye ; the Lord who contemplates  
 With eyes of love the myriad-nationed world ;  
 Lord of all being, ruling from on high,  
 Heaven, earth, and man, the sacred trine of life !  
 Great sea of spirit, fountain of all forms,  
 Issuer of all the laws of life which rule  
 Both unintelligent orbs and mightiest minds  
 In the well-ordered world, transcript divine  
 Of thought eternal in thy boundless breast ;  
 Let us to thee give all our titles, thine  
 Of right, thine only. Let us, gods of earth,  
 Thee worship, God of heaven, as shadows sun ;  
 Thee, self-existent, universal Lord,  
 Unchangeable, and independent : all  
 Embracing ; by thee planted all the worlds  
 Expand like flowers on life's eternal stem ;  
 Impenetrable, pure ; judge of all spheres ;  
 Author and worker of all laws which rule,  
 Material, mental, moral,—all the worlds ;

Father and founder of all souls, all stars,  
 Creator, blessing, hallower of all life;  
 Whose will necessity, whose word is fate;  
 Whose providence inexorable law;  
 Who to the infinite nature thou hast made,  
 Givest lavish maintenance; while in thyself  
 Wealth inexhaustible still overabounds;  
 Treasures of mercies unconceived. Who, yet,  
 To premonition of the humblest soul  
 Inspired by thee to ask what thou hast willed,  
 Attentive, grant'st thy saints their least request,  
 Were it an orb of light. All holy, hear;  
 We praise thee, we adore thee, God of gods!

*Odin.* All-father, permeating the world, all things  
 Sustaining, who end'st strife, and holy peace  
 Ordain'st, which lasts for aye; the omniscient, one,  
 And undeceivable, thee all gods adore.

*Festus.* And all the lesser shades which move like  
 moons,  
 Half darkened by the greater—half illumed—  
 Are priests and prophets of the mightier ones?

*Archangel.* They are;—and further round than eye  
 can mark,  
 The myriads of adorers of each god,  
 Confused and prostrate, as their souls awake  
 To the objects insubstantial of their prayers.  
 Behold! they kneel to those they hailed on earth  
 As makers—as omnipotent—eternal—  
 And cry for help, for comfort; none have they  
 To give to others or themselves; these high  
 Divinities, which, like shadowy pyramids,  
 Show form of strength, but of reality nought.  
 Gods of a mightier kind and nobler strain,  
 These truly—yea, but half false; and though now  
 Doomed, as the partial copies, so, untrue  
 Of the one universal, worthier yet  
 Man's trustful prayers and lauds, than those thou seest  
 Far off, round yon horizon of death's hall,  
 Monstrous, uncouth, fear-gendered, barbarous;  
 Such as were Rimac, who by Lima once  
 Sat, aboriginal oracle, imaged huge;  
 Till, smote by Christian mace, the immarbled lie  
 Rejoined chaotic formlessnesses: strewn  
 In grim and grinning fragments round its base:—  
 Or where in Kirauëa's lava-land  
 And island hills ablaze, fierce Pelé, thought  
 Goddess of fire, mid burning billows basked,  
 And music of the clashing hills of flame;  
 Or trode, triumphant, the tempestuous glow;  
 Such too the gory gods of western climes,

Who yearly claimed their feast of blood. The false,  
 The base, the brutish deities give way,  
 And all their sacred follies in their train,  
 Before the earthquake truth, engulfing all.  
 Woe to the false gods, woe! to prophet, priest,  
 And worshipper, all woe!

*Festus.* Hark! round the earth  
 Each soul hath found a tongue and uttereth woe.  
 Lo! from their thrones the man-made gods descend,  
 And rend their robes and trample on their crowns,  
 And hurl away their sceptres. Woe to all  
 The gods and idols of the heart of man!  
 Their sun is set for ever in the night  
 Which was ere light was. Surely it is more  
 To be true man or woman than false god,  
 And falser prophet. God alone, the true,  
 The God of heaven, and all, shall be confessed  
 And worshipped.

*Archangel.* Worshipped, witnessed, too,  
 By all: the faithful and the faithless—saint  
 And sinner. See, like clouds, the gods disperse,  
 Into their preoriginal nothingness.  
 And now the woe of those misguided, blind  
 To the demoniac madness of their creeds,  
 Shall be transformed to joy; they who adored  
 Their dreamlike deities, merely incompetent,  
 Shall, by God's grace, essential cause of all  
 Prior to all self-manifestive power,  
 Wisdom, or word, or act, reason, or will,  
 Their errors see transfigured into truth.  
 Listen, ye souls of men; all worship cease  
 Of what is false and fleeting; to your minds  
 Self-believed, always free, but bounded eye,  
 Fitted, or more or less; but now to truth  
 Transferred your lost allegiance shall receive  
 Just warrant of its right, perpetual peace,  
 Conscience of truth, bliss indestructible.  
 One only true God can be, has been, is.  
 False gods there never have been, nor false suns;  
 Save the abnormal shadows which betimes  
 Leap into life around him, and to man's  
 Weak sense owe all existence. So of these,  
 Parheliacal gods which mocked men's minds,  
 And, lighting them to darkness, left them there.  
 False gods have never been; nor false truths; forms  
 Partial and finite of the Infinite one  
 Who made all, all disposeth; who of all,  
 Hebrew and heathen, worldling and elect  
 Is worshipped, once as objects prayerwards served,  
 While of necessity falling short of truth,

To upraise, through all earth's times and climes, man's soul.  
 And one the Spirit of Evil, Dia, Lucifer,  
 Typhon, Misophanes, Satan, Aherman,  
 Hades, what name see'er priest pleaseth best,  
 In nature still and destiny, one and same,  
 Creation's imperfections personate.  
 And Evil vitalised and as being conceived !  
 False gods there never have been ; but of God  
 False names, false notions numberless. Behold  
 In these the transient types of one eterne ;  
 Each several aspect deified, of Truth ;  
 The obeliskal One, the primal three ;  
 The powers divine and cardinal of heaven.  
 Yet prayer, preferred with a pure heart, to Baal,  
 As neither heard nor answered could it be  
 By non-existent dæmon, might, by him,  
 Who sits enthroned in unthought purity,  
 The lord and lover of the world, be ta'en,  
 And righteously fulfilled ; so angels deem.  
 But in the depths of man's own nature, see,  
 As in a lake, reflected, hills, skies, clouds,  
 His heaven, his hell, and all his creature gods,  
 Inverted, and distorted, and obscured :  
 All which must vanish ere the truth divine  
 In glory supervene. Idolatry  
 Worshipped God meanly, as though knowable  
 Through generative energies and powers ;  
 Not as man's great regenerative Lord.  
 For life was of the Angels, as was law :  
 But love in place of law, as final judge,  
 In lieu of life, heaven's immortality  
 Christ taught, hence what in false faiths energies,  
 Were deemed are symbols only in the true.  
 God's omnipresence seems not sensuous ;  
 Unless he be in us we are not in him.  
 Signify all things ; nothing represents.  
 And therefore were the chosen race alone,  
 To whom the godly secret was confined,  
 Lapsing from faith, rebuked and charged with sin.  
 The general world, unconscious pietists  
 Of falsest creeds and errors, God allowed  
 To live on, unreprieved, till came the time  
 When all the mysteries of heaven and earth  
 Were put in evolution ; are but now  
 Fulfilling.

*Festus.* Lo ! the nations of the dead,  
 Which do outnumber all earth's races, rise ;  
 And high in sumless myriads over head  
 Sweep past us in a cloud, as it were the skirts  
 Of the Eternal passing.

*A Voice.*                      Souls, arise  
To deathless life !

*Archangel.* It is God speaks. Let us hence.  
The general judgment is in hand,—God's hand.  
The souls of those whom God loves circle us.  
For thee, thy lot thou knowest. As a seed  
Buried in earth doth multiply itself  
Full fifty fold, so will thy nature when  
Changed, it lifts head in the air divine of heaven.

*Festus.* Out of the depths of earth and the world's  
womb

Thine unborn angels seek thee, God, all love ;  
Now is thine hour for which all hours were made,  
All life created, all things else ordained ;  
Be it the hour of mercy, Lord ! to all,  
Now reap the righteous, righteous but in thee  
Any, their guerdon. Evil to repay  
With good was Christ's command, and earth with heaven  
Is thus the great example of his word.  
Do thou Lord be with us. In thee we live ;  
Our treasure, trust, and triumph is in thee,  
God's pure humanity ; whence salvation comes  
To the countless all thou dost redeem. Betrothed  
To heaven was earth upon her natal day.  
The ages sweep around me with their wings  
Like angered eagles cheated of their prey.  
Reach forth your arms ye angels. See them come.  
I hear the orderly torrent of their wings  
Hitherward streaming. Lo ! the glowing skies  
Are rushing to receive us. Oh ! rejoice  
All ye that are immortal, and whate'er  
Hath been predestined to eternal end.  
The day determined ere all time was, dawns.

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## XLIII.

Ill, now released.

Reckless of late discomfiture, as head  
 Of human strife 'gainst heaven, God's ends world-wide,  
 Inapt to appreciate, as his woeful fiends  
 He erst had promised, makes, an angel tells  
 To earth's dear saints, and how, one last and worst,  
 Attempt to o'erthwart God's just design. But as when  
 Some red volcano, scattering burning death,  
 The aggregated ire of ages lifts  
 Off earth's heart, saved from sphere-disruptive woes,  
 So, evil's ultimate force, hell's following, tends,  
 In way unthought, unreckoned by itself,  
 To goodward, vanquished by almighty good.

*Paradisal Earth.*

ANGELS and SAINTS—AN ANGEL *descending*; FESTUS.

*Saint.* Whence art thou?

*Angel.* I? from heaven, and thither tend;—  
 One moment here to bid all souls prepare.  
 Our Lord, the prince of peace eternal, comes  
 With his victorious hosts, to judge the world.

*Saint.* What victory hath our Liberator now gained?

*Angel.* One final, over death and hell. Shout, earth!  
 Thy freedom is accomplished, and thy foes  
 Brought down to endless ruin.

*Saint.* Angel, speak!

We burn to learn the tidings of this war,  
 Whereof thou tellest and doubtless wast a part.

*Angel.* Hot from the fight I come. This lightning  
 blade

Hath holpen well to thin the infernal rout,  
 Which back hath fled to hell, howling like winds.  
 But let me, at your will, ye peaceful saints,  
 Relate what happed to us, from first. The hour  
 Was come in God-home when the Son of Man,  
 Bowing his head before the Omnipotent,  
 Who doubled every blessing infinite  
 Wherewith he had enriched his only One  
 From first, rose from his glorious throne, and stepped  
 Into his sun-bright car, calling aloud  
 His angels to attend him while he went  
 To judge the earth, as foreordained of old;  
 That heaven and earth might view the majesty  
 And mercy of the God of all. We came,  
 Selectest spirits, countless; crowded bright  
 As the great stream of stars which flows through heaven,  
 Fast by the foot of God, each wave a world;  
 Eager to eye this act of glory long

Talked of in bliss, and now to be achieved.  
Forth from the starry towers, and world-wide walls,  
Of heaven, we set in high and silent joy,  
And journeyed half our way through space, when lo!  
A sight which checked the foremost flaming ranks,  
That halted frontwise, working doubt at first,  
But triumph after. Shielded and drawn up close,  
Behind a broken and decaying world,  
From whence the light had vanished like the light  
Out of a death-shrunk eye, sat Lucifer—  
Midst in the power of darkness, and the hosts  
Of hell, enthroned sublime; and all were still  
As ambushed silence round the foe of God.  
But oh! how changed from him we knew in heaven,  
Whose brightness nothing made might match nor mar;  
Who rose and it was morn; who stretched his wing,  
Or stepped, from star to star; so changed he showed  
Most like a shadowy meteor, through whose guise  
The stars dim glint—woe-wasted, pined with pain.  
And by his side there sate or shrank a shape  
We angels knew not, but the Son of God  
Knew him, and called him Death; whom when he saw,  
Arousing, after, out of sleep intense,  
That unrealmed tyrant drew his mortal dart,  
And drave it through himself,—a shade, shade-quelled.  
Then to that chief of mischief and his fiends,  
Who, thick as burning stones that from the throat  
Of mount eruptive foul the benighted sky,  
Shot up triumphant into air, as they  
Beheld our ranks move on, thus spake our Lord,—  
Not wrathfully, but sternly pitying:  
Hell's wretched remnant! wherefore crouch ye here?  
Is it to sue destruction, or to bar  
My passage? If it be, in both ye err.  
And will ye trust yourselves again to war  
With me, God-missioned? Have I not overcome  
Ye separately both? Speak, brutal Death?  
Fit follower and fellow to all woes,—  
Wherefore this instantaneous haste from hell,  
And both from Hadëan bondage, thus again  
So soon to compass mightiest wickedness,  
And tempt extremest wrath? Speak, head of hell!  
To him thus Lucifer: Paternal Son!  
Prince of the face of God, first-born of heaven,  
Head of all angels, truth-fulfilling Lord,  
Thy power I defy not; but in peace  
I war with fate. My life is to destroy.  
Evil hath more activity, if good  
More strength: and one must wear the other out.  
The more august the sin, so much the more

Is my necessity. Yon earth hath been  
The battle plain of heaven and hell. From God,  
Who knoweth all things, and from thee to whom  
Like knowledge he imparts, 'twere vain to hide  
My purpose, which for a thousand years, the years  
Of bondage, hath grown in me and lived on,  
Toad-like within a rock—vital where all  
Beside was death—to seize the nascent souls  
Of men as they rerose from death to life,  
And sweep them off in midst of all these hosts  
Assembled for that cause here as thou seest,  
To hell;—the universal race of man.  
But if ordained that not on them, but thee  
And thine, old hate shall satisfy itself,  
Approach no nearer: for we live by death;—  
Or turn the tide of fate, thou sole who canst!  
Ceasing thereat, his host upraised a shout  
Which shook the stars revibrant. Then to him  
Our Lord spake tolerantly: It is well God rules.  
Lo! to what base extremes infernal pride  
Can push a princely spirit once in heaven.  
Thee we will not destroy now, for thine hour  
Hath yet to come—when least thou thinkest it.  
God's wrath thou hast endured in punishment,  
Not yet his power. Away! I warn ye hence,  
Ere wrath ride forth again. To him the Fiend  
Answered: God rules not us the unordered damned,  
Nor reck's of hell. For ages past belief,  
Unless by those who like ourselves denied  
Thine own eternity—by creature mind,  
However lofty, hardly compassed—we  
Our pain have borne without remorse, or sign  
Of pity from our Maker. Shall we now  
Believe, while thus confronting him again,  
He means us better? Never worse than now.  
Therefore I say to ye, On! mightiest fiends,  
On! Let us reap companions for our woes,  
Or earn annihilation! As when of old,  
By bard, or soothsayer—but in vain—averred,  
The swift'ning shadow of some baleful god,  
Himself impalpable, swept through air, and lo!  
A high towered city tottered to its foot,  
Rock-arched; or many breasted fleet, lay strewn,  
Straggling, like leaflets torn from out a book,  
Upon the tide intempested; so bent  
To involve all soul in ruin, flew the fiend  
Towards his marked prey. At the mere word, to bar  
His way depute, whose ways are over all  
His works, hell's fiery phalanx instant rushed.  
A million spears blazed forth their challenge bright,

As of as many tongues. Serene our ranks  
 Stood like the stars o'er thunder. God the Son  
 Sate in his orbèd car, and breathed on them;  
 And they were rolled up like the desert sands  
 Before the burning wind,—throne wrecked on throne,  
 All ruined and fordone. Pursue! he cried,  
 Nor let them near the earth I go to judge.  
 And we pursued, as many as he chose,  
 And chased from sphere to sphere that wretched wreck  
 Of falsest fiends:—and I, it seems, am first  
 Of all my victor brethren, to declare  
 The triumph passed and coming; and your hearts  
 With tidings cheer of him to whom be due  
 Lauds for his so efficient breath.

*Saint.*

Behold

Another warrior angel from on high,  
 Like angels, singly always or in hosts.

*Angel.* It is the most dread Azrael, unto whom,  
 Exterminative, Death's sword is given as boon.

*Saint.* What sayst thou heavenly one?

*Azrael.*

To the extreme bound

Of light's domain we chased the flying foe,  
 Who on the confines of the lower air  
 Once rallied at their leader's stern command,  
 Whom more they fear, or seem to fear, than God.  
 They halted, formed, and faced us. I and mine  
 As on we came in order, full career,  
 Exalted by success, hoped ardently  
 One more convincing contest: but in spite  
 Of future woe, or the tempestuous threats  
 Of the great fiend who marshalled them, each eyed  
 His neighbour pale; their trembling shook all air;  
 And each one lift his arm, but no one struck.  
 Awhile in deathroelike suspense they stood;  
 Or like the irresolution of the sea  
 At turn of tide;—then, wheeled, and fled amain;  
 And in one mass immense broke down from heaven,  
 Cliff-like; there, let them lie. Such fate have fiends;  
 Such self-accumulate loss, such home, such hell.

*Festus.* And saw'st thou hell, the abode of fiends?

*Azrael.*

We saw;

Nor unsurprised; for round the mountain walls  
 Chasmy, that prop hell's nebulous domelet, dun  
 And dim as a star quenched, that regropes its way  
 To chaos, and to nothing, gleamed in light  
 Untarnishable these just words; God is love;  
 Corrective, perfective: hope, spirits never  
 To quit, save by due penitence, and consent  
 With law divine: thence hope; thence liberty;  
 Thence heaven. Be these yours now and ever. Hope!

So angels fallen may yet to upper spheres  
 Gradually evade, or elsewise as fate rules ;  
 But there now, flouting fate, the recreant rests  
 Of that huge host, once world-compact, astound  
 At their own ruinous failure ; forceless now  
 Their caitiff force for ever, as 'twould seem,  
 Self-blamed, all troubled, each other chiding, groan.  
 And we returned, hoping to meet, as charge  
 To all was given, the Lord our glory here.

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 XLIV.

Man's final doom conceive : the award to all  
 Earth's tribes of souls by spirits elect, their chiefs  
 Saintly, themselves through purifying rule  
 Of chastening spheres, to proximate perfectness  
 Long trained ; all rational hosts, by boundless love,  
 Brought round to service reasonable and just,  
 Of life's beneficent lord. A million minds  
 Fixed momentarily on him, and countless more,  
 In rest, act, sin or strife, all seen at once,  
 Show but as one to God, all man one soul.  
 Blessed, when in spiritual sacrament as now  
 All creature being, by God invited, taste  
 His infinite essence, who all life within,  
 Soul with soul pure communes. We glimpse the close ;  
 And swiftness than an angel's wings outpace  
 Time's plodding feet, things ripen unto their end.

*The Judgment of Earth.*

SON OF MAN, ARCHANGEL, ANGELS and SAINTS.

*Archangel.* Let all the dead rejoice ; their Saviour comes  
 With clouds of angels circled like a sun  
 Belted with light, and brighter than all light.  
 Lo, he descends and seats him on his throne ;  
 Alighting like a new made sun in heaven.  
 The world awaits thee Lord ! Rise. souls of men,  
 Buried beneath all ages from the first ;  
 Numbered, unnumbered, rise ye ; death, no more,  
 Hath power upon ye than the ravaging sea  
 Upon the stars of heaven. Ye elements  
 Give back your stolen dead. He claimeth them  
 Whose they both were and are and e'er shall be.

*Angel of Earth.* See ! to wipe from his word  
 The dust of years,  
 He comes, he comes, the Lord,  
 Man-god, reappears ;  
 To bless and to save  
 From death and the grave ;  
 To redeem and deliver,  
 For ever and ever.

*Son of Man.* I come to repay sin with holiness;  
And death with immortality; man's soul  
With God's spirit; yea, all evil with all good.  
Ye angels, ye elect, who with God's love  
Informed, shall rule with me o'er life, assume  
Your seats of judgment. Judge ye all in love,  
The love which God the all-father hath to you.

*Saints.* First-born of deity, judge ye, saidst thou. Be  
Our Judge, Lord! Teach us others how to judge.

*Son of Man.* Our father, heaven's supreme, the all-  
perfect one  
Hath me, the Son, born of humanity, filled  
With the spirit divine, and so of mercy and grace.  
Thus judge ye, God in you all judging; soul  
By soul before ye brought to cleansing pains  
Of self reproach consigned for all offence  
Conscious 'gainst God and man, ye so shall train  
By precept and example 'like divine,  
As shall all lowlier nature raise to sense  
Worthier of being, as pure and true to God,  
And fruitful sole of good; from sphere to sphere,  
Of every virtue, thus refined, and raised,  
Ye saints of choice with all ye rule, and serve,  
One vast equality so attained of bliss,  
With me shall enter heaven.

*Saints.* Be it where God will;  
But now we render back to thee the love  
Which is thine own, none else is worthy thee.  
Who shall commemorate all thy chosen names  
Friend, servant, brother, joint-heir, owner, lord,  
Priest, advocate, physician, teacher, guide:  
Prime essence, virtue of all excellence?

*Son of Man.* Whate'er the sign, the emblem, chartered  
law,  
'Treaty or covenant, man in ages passed  
Hath boasted, of the spirit that should redeem  
From sin and ignorance, idols many and foul,  
His spirit to purify and lead to enjoy  
Visions of peace triumphant, glory and power;  
Know all are symbols only of truth; and know  
To creature thought, God in his wholeness seems  
Inestimable; and these conceived him best  
Partwise, as acting through main energies,  
Sevenfold, or trebly substantiated, increate  
Aspects of being; but illusory; those,  
With more or less of majesty, as a cloud  
Sun-gilded, of the storm's tempestuous breath,  
Shows nobler than the minimous gust man's lips  
Force on air froze; so, more than all things God:  
All spirit, all substance, manifest or concealed.

God know ye one pure spirit, and self-outrayed  
 In infinite forms, instinct with deity, each  
 Which time by time, to its central source returns  
 Its end, its reason sole ; intelligences,  
 Angels all, sons of God, to him, of all  
 Created, spirit and matter, sire and sum ;  
 For as in man's breath congealed, cross, starlet, flower  
 Sphere crystalline, form, so into life all being,  
 Harmonious and symmetric, God imbreathes.  
 Behold, this day I dwell with ye on earth,  
 Time doling for the accomplishment of things,  
 Judicial, curative, rewardful ; lawed  
 Even to the last. The next shall be in heaven,  
 Where ye shall meet the all-father, and remain  
 In the eternal presence ; the all in one,  
 The sole true being of the universe.

*Saints.* Dear Lord, our sire and saviour, for thy gifts,  
 The world were poor in thanks, though every soul  
 Should nought but breathe them ; every blade of grass,  
 Yea every atomie of the earth and air  
 Thanks utter like to dew. Thy ways are plain  
 Only in thine own light. And this great day,  
 By one unfolded with thy spirit replete,  
 Unveils all nature's laws and miracles  
 All to thee all as one. Thy judgment all  
 Wise mercy, Lord of love, the world's no more  
 Illegible ; all is bright as new-born star.  
 All men have sinned ; but not a single soul  
 Less than the countless all can satisfy  
 The ultimate triumph which to us belongs  
 Who in mortality strove, and won : or failed  
 As these, the unnumbered, till death after. See !

*Son of Man.* The book of life is opened. Heaven  
 begins.

## XLV.

'Twas held of old by some heresiarch sage,  
 Whose nobler name time bruits not overmuch,  
 That evil and good, twin powers, as light and dark,  
 Were destined to contest with varying mean,  
 The world while e'er it lasts ; but in the sum  
 Of things, the final conquest is the Lord's.  
 Reject not all the fable. In this believe :  
 The grand intent of being, and its main stress,  
 Is towards its best, the all-perfect. Rest in God !  
 Heaven, highest and all enfolding, fills at last  
 Its infinite bounds : reward of love divine,  
 Salvation, not alone of this soul, view,  
 Whose steps we have tracked through time, nor total man's  
 Only, but of all spirits. Our God, in fine,  
 Drawing his thousand-folded veil of light,  
 Shows to the world, the astound and jubilant world,  
 As that from first foretold and justified,  
 The universe cleansed of evil ; hell for aye  
 Abolished ; the holy happy ; all create  
 Redeemed ; themselves all bliss ; all love, their God.

*Heaven.*

THE DEITY, ANGELS, SAINTS, SPIRITS ELECT, FESTUS,  
 LUCIFER, THE RESTORED ANGELS.

*The Recording Angel.* All souls of men are judged save  
 one, earth's chosen,  
 And last of God's elect.

*Son of God.* He, too from first  
 'Mong spirits predestined saved, though to the last  
 Tried, longest disciplined, see ye entering ! Come  
 Immortal, I have saved thy soul to heaven.  
 Come hither. All hearts bare themselves to me  
 As clouds unbind their bosoms to the sun.  
 Wealthy was thine in gifts of good ; and, grant  
 Its guilt most lay in lavished time and thought  
 On uneternal ends, unuseful truth,  
 Knowledge, mind-power, and worldly sway, thy tests,  
 Let pass, for one whose life 'twas all to serve ;  
 Let light outweigh the darkness.

*Saints.* Saints rejoice !

*Elect Spirits.* Welcome, free spirit, long lost, long  
 hoped to heaven,  
 Where pure perfection reigns, the world of gods.

*Saints.* Angel of all the covenants, law and love,  
 Pattern of manhood, with whose kind conformed  
 Each variously imperfect souls of men  
 Are made and constituted, we thank thee now  
 For this full harvest.

*Festus.* Could I, Lord, pour my soul out

In thanks, even as a river rolling ever  
It were too scant for that I owe thee.

*Son of God.*

Nay,

Immortal life were long enough, as life  
On earth, or as a moment is, to show  
Thy love of good, thy thanks to him who saves.  
One heart-throb sometimes earneth heaven, one tear.

*Festus.* Maker of worlds and souls, let all thee thank  
Who have lived, and deathless witness of thy grace,  
Me too ; thee, holy one, who hast chosen me  
From old eternity, while yet I lay  
Hid like a thought in thee unuttered, God ;  
Creator, saviour, judge ; sun of the soul,  
Whose day is now all noon, eternal noon ;  
Who makest of the universe, one heaven ;  
We praise thee, heaven doth praise thee ; praise thyself.

*Lucifer.* Is not this man mine ?

*God.*

Evil ! hear thou my words.

In the beginning, ere I bade things be ;  
Or, finite filling with the infinite,  
Ere ever I begat the worlds on space ;  
I knew of him, and saved him in my Son,  
My first-born, God's humanity preconceived,  
Who now hath judged, for with the Spirit divine  
Fraught, heaven's humanity impersonate, he,  
Feels yet the frailties of things made, and them  
Like feelingly can judge. What deity chose  
To make, divine humanity therefore saves :  
For I abide not sin, and in my Son,  
The spirit of pure humanity deified,  
There is no sin ; not that he takes away :  
It is destroyed for ever, and made nothing.  
Spirit of evil, this mortal loved me ;  
With all his doubts he never doubted God ;  
But from doubt gathered truth, as snow from clouds,  
The most and whitest from those darkest. Such,  
His aim was, such his trust to gain for good.  
With many a shortcoming, his most strong desire  
Was to do good among men ; to show life's end  
In knowing, loving God, and making known,  
His boundless grace ; him vindicating from charge  
Of partial choice, mind prejudicial ; wrath  
Unjust of endless reprobation aimed  
'Gainst sinners unpermitted to repent.

And for that peace he chose for man, albeit  
Power he himself and life lost ; for that good  
He chose 'gainst ill, and evil forgave by ill,  
Most wronged, and myriads with him, see all here.

*Lucifer.* Now know I who for certain are the elect,  
The sons of God, predestined all to bliss.

I leave thee, Festus. Here, thou wilt be happy,  
 To be in heaven is God to love for ever,  
 And him thou must love, here. Here thou wilt find  
 All thou canst love and ought'st; for souls reborn  
 Of deity, made and moulded over again  
 Into his sunlike emblems, multiply  
 His might and love; the saved are suns, not earths;  
 And with original glory shine of God;  
 While I keep on, aye deepening in my darkness,  
 With not one hope-gleam cross the gloom of being.

*Son of God.* Father, I pray to thee again one prayer,  
 One only, it is my latest.

*God.* It is heard.

*Festus.* Let us part, spirit. It may be in the coming,  
 That as some sun extinguished once, may yet,  
 In the ends of heaven restituent, shine again  
 Light-crowned; so we all, sometime worth God's making,  
 May yet be worth forgiving, taking back  
 Into his bosom pure again; and so blessed  
 To all eternity with the increase of truth,  
 And spirit of just obedience, that all mind  
 Shall one be, in fine, with him who is one in all.

*Lucifer.* It may be then I shall cease to be. Farewell.  
 Forgive me in that I tempted thee.

*Festus.* I am glad.

*God.* Stay, spirit; it suits not the eternal laws  
 Of good, that things create be all unmade,  
 Nor yet that ill be immortal. In all space  
 Is joy and glory, and the gladdening stars,  
 Exultant in the sacrifice of sin,  
 And creatural defect unfilled by faith,  
 Leap forth as though to welcome earth to heaven;  
 Leap forth and die. All nature disappears.  
 Shadows are passed away, through all is light.  
 Man is as high above temptation now,  
 And where by grace he alway shall remain,  
 As ever sun o'er sea; and sin is burned  
 In hell to ashes, with the dust of death.  
 The worlds themselves are but as dreams within  
 Their souls who lived in them; and thou art null,  
 And thy vocation useless, gone with them.  
 Therefore shall heaven rejoice in thee again,  
 And the lost tribes of angels, who in thee  
 Wedded themselves to woe, first, and who dwell  
 Around the dizzying centres of all worlds,  
 Blessed with the blessedest be again; for thus  
 Salvation to the lost accrues, far passed  
 Thine ultimate thought, but wholly in scope of mine.  
 Draw nigh, ye angels, who, long time, with hope  
 Inspired of heavenly pardon, and with will

Of betterment, and of penitence moved, have striven  
 My grace to attract, and bring your spirits again  
 To the orderly progress of all good, approach.  
 Lo! ye are all restored, rebought, rebrought  
 To heaven, by him who cast ye forth, your God.  
 Your ransom, also boundless, hath been paid;  
 The pure humanity of the all-being God  
 Can let nought suffer woe for aye; not those  
 Who most have wronged him, and the souls he loves.  
 For his murderers Christ on earth forgiveness asked;  
 And that he would I will. The sage of Auz,  
 Unjustly accused; the sage of Athens, doomed  
 Iniquitously, plead pardon; nor shall man  
 Be juster nor more merciful than his God.  
 The fount love fills from is too deep for mere  
 Creation to exhaust, draw he, draw ye,  
 Angels, eternally. Your primal fall,  
 All nature's, is an everlasting lapse,  
 A bottomless descent till stayed by grace:  
 Which grace is mine. The issuant universe  
 Returns but to its source as dewdrops seek  
 Exhaled by sun, cloud-massed, their parent sea.  
 God's gifts are ave of increase. For this cause  
 Receive ye tenfold of all gifts and powers.  
 And thou who camest to heaven one soul to claim,  
 Remain possessed by all. The sons of bliss  
 Shall welcome thee again and all thy hosts;  
 Of whom thou first in glory as in woe  
 Last, most, in bright as darkness late, shalt shine.  
 Take, Lucifer, thy place. This day redeemed  
 Art thou to archangelic state. Bright child  
 Of morning, once again thou beamest fair,  
 O'er all the starry armaments of light.

*Lucifer.* The highest and the humblest I of all  
 The beings whom thou hast made, eternal Lord!

*God.* Thus art thou vanquished, adversary of good.  
 And thus restored. Death slain, sin quelled, all ill  
 Convert, no foe left, conquest is no more.  
 And you, ye saints, rejoice! that reign of old  
 Foretold, millennial, ceased, love all, the truth  
 Shall dwell in. and fulfill, all spirit create,  
 Hallow and quicken, that longed for reign with heaven's  
 Identical, of humanity pure, alone  
 Subsidiary to God's, must disappear.  
 The spirit of just humanity divinized,  
 No more distinct from deity yields at once  
 To him its mediate being; and by the loss  
 Of separateness all gaining, man with God  
 Unites, as even in firmamental light,  
 One, universal, vanisheth every star;

So creatures all in deity ; all create  
 Intelligence circled in the boundless wheel ;  
 All ends in the initial centre crowned.  
 Lo ! death and hell have passed away ; the extremes  
 Of space no longer blurred with the foul reek  
 Of spheres sin-tormented ; heaven pure and calm,  
 Cored in God's infinite unity, see the whole.

*Angels.* Oh marvellous mercy, God e'er blessing all.

*Saints.* Behold they come, the legions of the lost,  
 Transformed already by the bare behest  
 Of God our Maker, to the purest form  
 Of seraph lustre.

*God.* These have but fulfilled  
 The faults of imperfection, nor without  
 Evil, so named of man, can things create,  
 Act of themselves, or interact. Not theirs  
 Perfection ; worse and better rounds all life,  
 Seeking or shunning, all intelligent act.  
 All elements of life act downwards ; this  
 Destructive, sole, aspires ; so mind create  
 Self 'stranged from God, through death, death first and last,  
 To him returns ; through ill all good consummed.  
 Be all received.

*The Restored Angels.* But thine be all the praise  
 And ours submissive thanks ; thine, who so mad'st  
 The universe that its good and ill alike  
 Praise thee, the Soul supreme.

*Saints.* O say ye risen  
 From life unblessed, how came the end we see ?

*The Restored Angels.* Protecting souls, how, hear. Ye  
 doubtless marked  
 From these rejoicing heights where never war's  
 Dark storm-cloud blots the blue serene of day  
 Eternal, hell's late feud. When evil had done  
 Its worst, and we 'gainst God's divinest power  
 Had fought and failed in ruin of the kind ends  
 Thou, Lord ! hadst planned for man ; and seeing how vile  
 How vast our wreck ; how hopeless showed ill's strife  
 'Gainst good divine ; and minding us of meed  
 Like boundless, wisdom-promised to all soul  
 Fixed on self betterment penitently, there rose  
 On us a twilight dawn of reason, eclipsed  
 Long, woefully, but e'er brightening, till we viewed  
 In heaven's true light, gradual, our wretched deeds  
 Soul torturing now, and all the unholy frauds,  
 We had, self-blinded, mocked our sight with ; saw  
 Unworthy of rational virtues, so endowed  
 As we, with means of growth in excellence ; powers  
 Incapable not to range with these on high,  
 Who, through good, rule ; one sole step ta'en, and held.

That step we took, and resolutely confessed,  
 Repentant in ourselves of all the passed,  
 The evil we had done and meant. The wail  
 Thou heard'st, Lord, piteous judge! and over all  
 Came peace; then, God most blessed us and forgave:  
 Oh! he hath triumphed over all the world,  
 In mercy, over earth, and death, and hell.

*God.* For that my grace is greater than the world,  
 My essence vaster than the universe;  
 All recreated life exalted now  
 To union with its Maker; all may see  
 Their being's divine foundations in myself;  
 And know that though on all the fine I fixed  
 Of finitude; upon all the soul's results;  
 Woes self-begotten; self-conceived deserts,  
 And misconstructions of the Merciful One;  
 When come the end of all, which none but I  
 Know nor can know, it is mine,—the whole, made pure  
 By perfect annihilation of ill, to enfold  
 In mine own infinite being, and in all  
 The life of love imbreathe, the life of God.  
 Evil, to soul create, means opposite  
 Of what to her in outward guise shows good,  
 In act or thought: thus death to all which live;  
 Corruption and decay. But in my sight  
 Evil nor was nor is. I made the world,  
 Called it by mine own name and named it good;  
 The infinite whole as circumscribed in me.  
 All things I made to be good, and good is bliss.  
 Free choice to prove and need of grace, needs not  
 Fireflames eternal, feigned by zeal o'erstrained  
 In God's behalf. Free-will most perfect, pure,  
 Hath still a limit, my will; which all ellipse  
 Of thought create outcircles; if with mine  
 Co-apt, infinite virtually; opposed,  
 Fate's indefeasible right revives. So deem,  
 Hate against me—what else is sin?—eternal,  
 In conscious spirit, its author I, must mean  
 Such being were best not being, and so in God,  
 Defectible judgment, folly in wisdom. Far  
 From nature's mind glorying in reason, fly  
 Such base unhallowed thoughts! The worlds I made  
 That I in them might joy, and they in me.  
 Life I have made enjoyment. Should I make  
 The sense of all but boundless being, woe?  
 Though fails the imperfect left to itself to weigh  
 Perfection's warnings, or the fateful proofs  
 Of its incompetency itself to rule,  
 And thus by ill corrupt, wrong willing, sin,  
 Suffering in time-state righteous penalties

Proportioned to sin's voluntary offence,  
 Yet justice increate yields final grace,  
 From him who founded all, of all defect,  
 All perfect source, sole answerable Cause.  
 Now, too, that heaven is all, know, no such thing  
 As absolute evil exists, nor could exist,  
 Ever. In him who wronged, 'twas better, choice  
 To have of good and ill with life than not ;  
 Though after justly fined for wrongful choice ;  
 Better it was for him who suffered ill,  
 To enjoy life than not be ; regard, too, had,  
 To the heavenly recompense, that for innocence,  
 For tested virtue this. Now, evil gone  
 Out of the world that was, like one dark wave  
 Merged in a sea of light, grace all sustains.  
 Apart from natural causes and the range  
 Of requisite freedom, evil is not. Free mind,  
 Free within certain bounds, imperfect, fails  
 In due conception, justly inadequate,  
 Of my divine intents,—to creatures known  
 As fate, doom, destiny, so good and ill  
 War spiritual wage which lasts while time lasts. Here  
 Good, losing nought, is made divine, and ill  
 Sloughing its selfish personalty becomes,  
 Transfigured in ascent, the all redeemed,  
 Commensurate with soul kind ; and mind finite,  
 Distinct from, yet with deity perfused,  
 The whole is peace ; divisive nature ends.  
 Truth only unitive, marks the spirit's path ;  
 An endless radius from a boundless point  
 Of pure perfection. All created mind,  
 Whate'er its power, how far soe'er it fly  
 This parent point, hath limit to its force ;  
 And, active thought its essence, must revolve  
 Around some central spirit.

*Angels.*

God !

*God.*

Henceforth

All thought of the now hallowed world of life,  
 Tends to communion with the infinite One ;  
 Communion vital, virtual and divine ;  
 Wherein is bliss supreme.

*The Holy Spirit.*

O sacred Son

Of deity, God's humanity, joy with me.  
 The tears of nature's birth, time's death-pangs passed,  
 And justice glorified in all love made,  
 I, Wisdom, parent of all souls, rejoice,  
 With thee, as thou with me, next to God's throne.  
 Sole king and conqueror of the spirit world  
 Who by thine infinite sacrifice, and in time's  
 Severance from divinity, didst conclude

In ample verge, the universe of soul ;—  
 Thy throne, the crown of heaven, thy crown thy name,  
 Thy name the ever blessed Lord of life ;  
 Bliss-giver thou, who art the bliss of all,  
 Be thy soul satiate with this victory.

*Son of God.* All hallowing deity, all parent power,  
 Of God prime effluence, it is for thee I fought  
 Time's universal war ; that all by thee  
 Soul-sanctified might in spirit through thee return  
 To their all central source ; for thee I gain  
 This heavenly victory ; for thyself this peace  
 Celestial, recreative.

*The Holy Spirit.* Lo ! I have seen  
 The mountain of creation, all whose sands  
 Were starworlds, called eternal by made mind,  
 Rays finite of the all central infinite,  
 Like to a night-born islet, mid the main,  
 Sink in the abyss of being, as it rose.

*Angel of Earth.* Be glad, O world of worlds. Rejoice,  
 all life,  
 And mourn no more. Death, evil, suffering cease.

*Ouriel.* Lift up your starry voices, all ye spheres,  
 Let all creation from its inmost heart,  
 Sound forth one song of ceaseless, boundless praise !

*Festus.* How joys the soul redeemed, joys, as when  
 first,  
 On the horizon of God's awful eye,  
 Some world he hath willed into existence beams,  
 And gladdens in his glance, whose look is love !

*Luniel.* What infinite wonders we have witnessed here ;  
 And now the greatest this, of all most blessed :—  
 Triumphant, all embracing good, the whole  
 Concordant, one made with the One supreme :  
 For as in things material, force all rules,  
 In matters spiritual, weakness wins ; as once  
 Of old, on the angel visioned plain, thou sawest,  
 Wrestler with God, and prince ; so, once again,  
 It is God's humanity prevails o'er God.

*Festus.* Unsearchable are God's ways, God's works.

*Angel.* But not  
 Dubious when shown. In this most luminous life,  
 Shined through by deity, and wherein the worlds,  
 God's vast and palpable thoughts transpicuous range,  
 The outcome, child, behold of all good deeds,  
 Though profitless misdeemed on earth ; all aims  
 Which faultless in themselves failed ; hopes well based,  
 Frustrate, not fruitless in the eternal plan ;  
 Not futile ; but to the soul advantageous.  
 Here roots of duty set in natural mould  
 Of heart-love, social virtues, freely bloom ;

And fragrant, though, below, they oft-times showed  
Blighted, and irresponsible to just hope.  
These are the flowers that now unwithering wreath  
The immortal brows of saints, and shed far round  
Perfume of holy hilarity. And as marked  
On earth, through some dark cloud-cleft, travelling swift,  
The light-shaft downward shot from the sun's broad eye,  
Illumed successive mount, spire, city or sea ;  
So points God's finger, brightening all the dark  
Of being, fate's favourite secrets, one by one  
To spirits benign, of reason sanctified,  
And to saints prepared, permitted, truths profound,  
In wisdom's breast hid ; all the problems dark  
And intricate, of existence solved ; we, taught  
Thus, by Omniscience.

*Angel.* Here, too, in the soul  
All tendencies of good, all rarest powers  
And faculties of spirit, made holy, pure,  
Potent to imbue receptive mind with sense  
Of beauty spiritualized and sanctified,  
Have full fruition, scope unlimited ; end  
Boundless ; all plans prolific of the weal  
Of worlds, and sanctioned by God's sign of good,  
Their harvest through the appointed ages reap.

*Guardian Angel.* That sinners be made holy, sin itself  
By righteousness condoned, and vital bliss  
Out of deadliest suffering wrought,—though to finite mind  
From God divergent,—strange, astounds not soul  
United with divinity ; for what  
More contrary can show than heaven thus full  
Of boundless being, all glorified with bliss,  
And the black void whence all things, at his word,  
Leapt into life, and starred the skies with light ?  
That flame should heavenward rise, or waters fall,  
Or ice evolve heat, mind no more confounds,  
Than that who, fallible, stood, should sometime fail.  
Why that who fell, should rise ? All evil but gives  
Just scope for God's more grand benevolence,  
Who forms all natures, and at will transforms,  
Happy in making happy, O Spirit elect  
Of heaven and earth, and using to best ends  
This life-world and its universal powers.  
Thus, too, with the angels once estranged, at last,  
Atoning by obedience just to God,  
Oh doubly blessed and trebly worshipped name !  
Of all in heaven or earth, or under earth,  
Self-exiled, penitent, from affairs mundane,  
For selfish rule, inexpiable else ;  
For cruel, reckless deed, or impious thought ;  
Misconstrued love, and means of grace thrust back ;

They, their asbestine expurgation passed,  
 Exalted by progression infinite,  
 Through conduct, aspiration, and intent,  
 Thrice recreate, see now rise ; and round God's throne,  
 Where o'er the infinite and immaculate skies,  
 Yon rainbow bends its everlasting beams ;  
 Not drops of water, but translucent spheres  
 Quick with eternal life, wherein abide  
 The spirits of time all glorified, they, translate,  
 Bright guardians e'er shall stand ; like dear to God  
 Both man and angel kind ; and so, in the end,  
 Unnumbered times, duration unbethought,  
 When passed, our God, his name be ever blessed  
 By all, and hallowed, reigning mediately  
 In all the worlds of space, in all the powers  
 Of spirit aggrandized, holy, happy made,  
 Shall the whole infinite animate and bless  
 Where'er soul lives, wherever stretch his skies.

*Festus.* So great his mercies are, so vast his love,  
 So infinite is his wisdom, all things seem  
 Possible, be they only good and kind.  
 All kind affections ripening here in heaven,  
 A thousand fold beneath God's smile, and blessed  
 Of all, all blessing, perfect life attained,  
 Nature expands into divinity.

*Guardian Angel.* Hither with me.

*Festus.* But where are those I love ?  
 The dear religions of my heart, all true,  
 All perfect, all consoling while they ruled ?

*Guardian Angel.* Yon happy troop.

*Festus.* Ah, blessed ones, come to me.  
 Are ye all here too with me ?

*Angels.* All.

*Festus.* It is heaven.

*Angel.* All spirits in heaven one holy company make,  
 Self-ruled and penetrate with divinity.

*Guardian Angel.* Heaven,  
 God's special seat, was with him from the first,  
 And must be e'er ; but this thou seest, the soul's  
 Guerdon, creation's crown, was last of things  
 Made, and is ever largening. Through divine  
 Beneficence, its foundations bright were laid  
 In reason's holiest verities, in mind's  
 Acts absolute of good ; from selfhood strained ;  
 In nature's excellences made pure ; in life's  
 World-winning charities hallowed, and the chords  
 Sentient, of sympathy, through every sphere,  
 Spiritual and animate stretched, the vital worlds  
 Of virtue, and light intelligible ; lines these  
 Of God's design demonstrant, so adapt

To duty's parallels of choice, and act  
 Responsible ; so commensurate each degree  
 Of just obedience there to bliss here, earned  
 Celestially, that not to see the fair  
 Congruities of the eternal world with time's  
 Conditions, where'er placed, were nor to know,  
 Nor be. As in heaven this central infinite,  
 The vast concerted laws of general being,  
 Do in God's ear, hallowed and harmonized,  
 Blend spiritually, and that peace express  
 Created mind can neither sum nor sound,  
 So on man's soul and natures like to his,  
 Of good and ill mixed, not infallible, falls  
 The calm most sweet, of orderly judgment born,  
 They share, who enter heaven ; those first who come  
 By grace divine forechosen, from all law free,  
 Vouched for of God, who, careful, guides the paths  
 Of saints on earth with this hand, as with that,  
 The worlds ; and these through training laws who passed  
 All tests, triumphant, tests, the touch of God,  
 Whereby he proves the virtue of souls, but passed  
 Their powers tries none, nay always far within ;  
 So, in all temptations justified ; and this  
 One backward glance makes clear, think thou on thine ;  
 For, here, man's course, whate'er refining spheres  
 He pass through, shows with strictest relevance  
 To the passed, no error possible, every age  
 Brightening till soul, all verifying time,  
 All grades of being accomplished, all desires,  
 All aspirations crowned, each with the One  
 In absolute union rests.

*Festus.* All see I now ;  
 And heaven within the spirit, the whole divine.  
 Before God's all felicitating love  
 All earth love pales ; how pure so e'er or dear,  
 And worship, sense of immanent deity,  
 Labouring within the spirit to burst forth  
 Into supreme expression of all truth,  
 Circles the soul as with a glory cloud.

*Angels.* All praise, all love, all worship Lord be thine !

*Festus.* Who can survey the world's vast ways and  
 woes,  
 He hath passed through, times extinct ; all orbs like earth,  
 The sun-born seed and increment of light ;  
 Founded in strata deep and dim of stars ;  
 Beyond those skies, the camp of light, where gleams  
 The bannered sun, God's oriflamme ; beyond  
 Each sun-star space knows, beaming out his life  
 Godwards, in glorious gratitude of light ;  
 Passed all time's mutable opposites, act and rest ;

The mighty sequences of light and night ;  
 Systems, scarce form deforms, so pure, so nigh  
 To the unconditionate sphere, this dome divine  
 The infinite bound which circles being finite,  
 And absolute centre of mere cause ; nor feel  
 Soul worship, humblest, unitive with him,  
 Maker of good, destroyer of all ill,  
 Saviour of all perfectible essence, God,  
 The highest bliss of being, being knows ?  
 Wherefore let us him ceaselessly adore ;  
 Active or meditative, as wisdom wills ;  
 Praise him, ye chosen of the earth and skies,  
 Ye visible raylets of the invisible light ;  
 Blend with the universal heaven, your hymns ;  
 Immortal leaflets of love's holy flower,  
 Breathe forth your perfume of eternal praise.

*Angel.* Come, let us join our souls unto the song  
 Of glory, which the saved all sing, to God.

*The Saved.* Father of goodness,  
 Son of love,  
 Spirit of comfort,  
 Be with us !  
 God who hast made us,  
 God who hast saved,  
 God who hast judged us,  
 Thee we praise.  
 Heaven our spirits,  
 Hallow our hearts ;  
 Let us have God-light  
 Endlessly,  
 Ours is the wide world,  
 Heaven on heaven ;  
 What have we done, Lord,  
 Worthy this ?  
 Oh ! we have loved thee ;  
 That alone  
 Maketh our glory,  
 Duty, meed.  
 Oh ! we have loved thee !  
 Love we will  
 Ever, and every  
 Soul of us.  
 God of the saved,  
 God of the tried,  
 God of the lost ones,  
 Be with all !  
 Let us be near thee  
 Ever and aye ;  
 Oh ! let us love thee  
 Infinite !

*Festus.* So, soul and song, begin and end in heaven,  
 Your birthplace and your everlasting home.

*Angels.* In heaven extolled are now all souls of earth,

And each particular essence at thy word,  
 O God ! rejoins the pure and pious skies.  
 All government, sway, and empire is at last  
 United here, the kingdom sole of heaven,  
 Meant from the first for universal rule.  
 In boundless bliss all creatural power is now  
 Essentially and evermore absorbed.  
 Henceforth the only offspring of the word  
 Of all sustaining grace, shall teach the sou's,  
 Victors through God, eternal virtue's truth ;  
 Adding celestial might to every thought  
 Hallowed by thee, by thee all thought inspired.  
 The gods are one God and all power is his.  
 High over all and deep in all dost thou  
 Ever rule one thing by another ; still  
 On all thy throne is based, and round all thou  
 Stretchest the line unlimited of heaven.  
 Divine and holy is thine every work,  
 Eternal only as ordained by thee,  
 Unknown but to thyself, who dost remain  
 Steadfast in love though heaven and earth rebel.  
 All sway is thine, Lord ! heaven and earth are one  
 In universal glory : world by world  
 Night renders up to thee the fruit of light,  
 Sown in her bosom, reaped and ripened here ;  
 Unutterably happy to approach  
 Perfection in the Infinite, how far,  
 How high soever, still to thee allied.  
 All blessing God ; who with thy boundless love  
 Dost deify the heavens and make the soul  
 Of man expand with immortality,  
 Now we with him in fourfold joy rejoice,  
 And all the heavenly hierarchies of light,  
 Ineffable, adore thy grace supreme.  
 All sanctifying Lord of love and might,  
 Let whole creation testify to thee,  
 As vice to virtue, darkness to the light,  
 Hell thus to heaven, and man to deity !—  
 Glory to thee our God, who all to prove.  
 Of earth the law, of heaven the grace above,  
 Dost make the great I am, the all I love.

*Son of God.* All-father ! all thou hast made is saved.

The whole,

As being deified is in thee, the all-one.

*The Holy Spirit.* God all in all, the all-perfect,  
 heaven's complete.

Time there hath been when only God was all :  
 And it shall be again. The hour is named,  
 When angel, saint, man, every spirit create,  
 Though more or less imperfect, tested, tried,

Made pure, and unbelievably uplift  
 Above their present state—drawn up to God,  
 Like dew into the air—shall be all heaven :  
 And all souls shall be in God, and shall be God,  
 And nothing but God, be.

*Son of God.*

Let all be God's.

And us within his essence whence we came,  
 Born, and proceeding, oned and samed, return.

*God.* World without end, and I am God alone ;  
 The Aye, the Infinite, the Whole, the One.  
 I only was—nor matter else, nor mind,  
 The self-contained Perfection unconfined.  
 I only am—in might and mercy one ;  
 I live in all things and am closed in none.  
 I only shall be—when the worlds have done,  
 My boundless being will be but begun.

THE END.

JANUARY 1877.

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